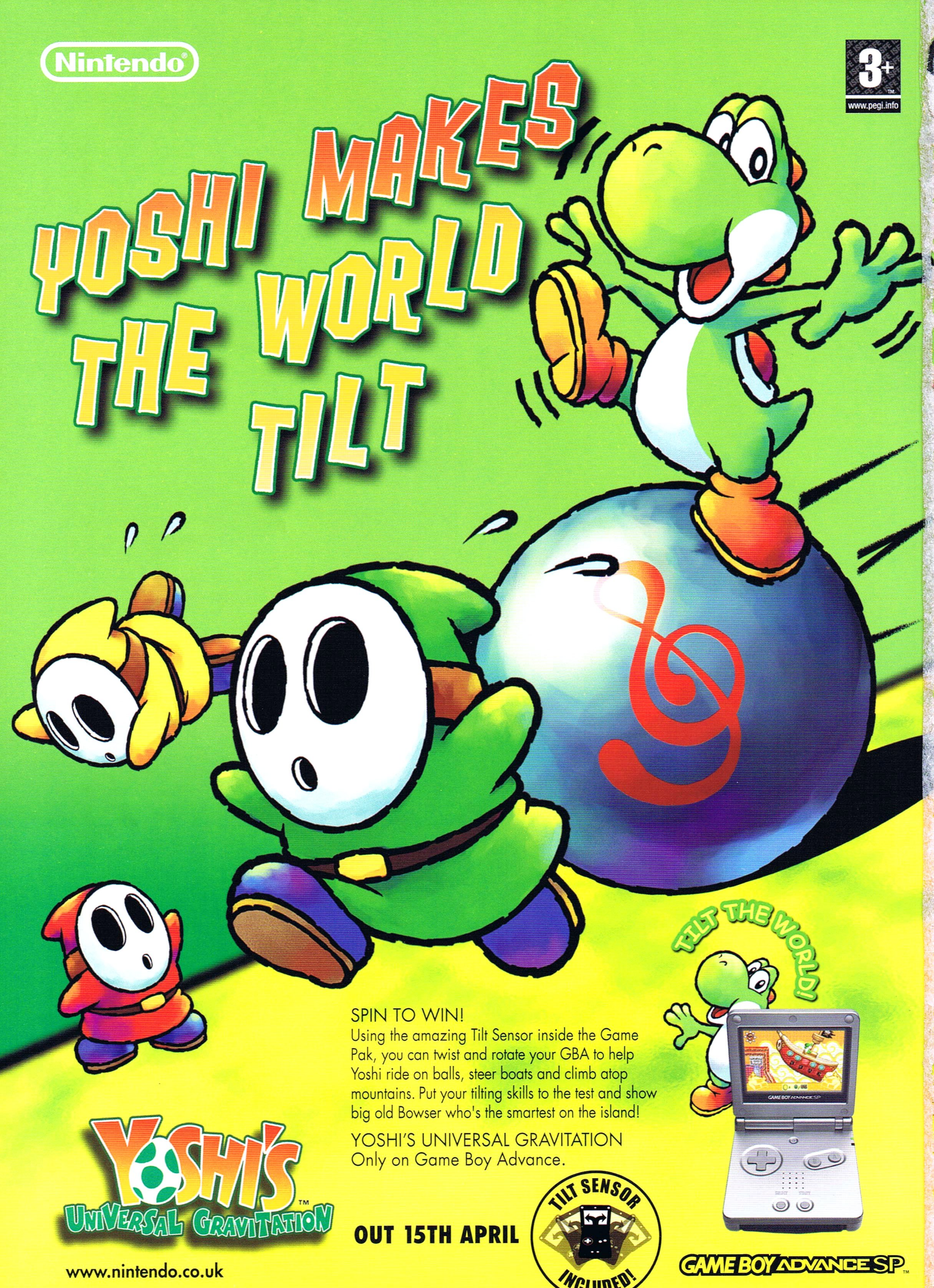

NINTENDO GAMECUBE • DS • GBA
N·GC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING
ISSUE #106
MAY 2005 / £3.99
100% UNOFFICIAL
N·GC POCKET
FOR HANDHELD GAMERS
DS GOES ONLINE!
EXCLUSIVE!
KILLER 7
IT'S BLOODIER THAN RESIDENT EVIL! CAPCOM'S SHOCKER PLAYED TO DEATH!
PLUS!
ZELDA
SEE THE NEW SHOTS. GET THE NGC VERDICT.
MEDAL OF HONOR EUROPEAN ASSAULT
FIND OUT WHY IT WHIPS RISING SUN.
REVOLUTION
IT'S ONLINE! GET ALL THE ESSENTIAL FACTS!
EXCLUSIVE!
SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY
TOM CLANCY'S STEALTH SUPERHERO RETURNS! FIRST REVIEW INSIDE!
£3.99
05
MAY 2005
9 771475 584029
gamesradar.com
future publishing
Media with passion



Nintendo
3+
www.pegi.info
YOSHI MAKES THE WORLD TILT
TILT THE WORLD!
SPIN TO WIN!
Using the amazing Tilt Sensor inside the Game Pak, you can twist and rotate your GBA to help Yoshi ride on balls, steer boats and climb atop mountains. Put your tilting skills to the test and show big old Bowser who's the smartest on the island!
YOSHI'S UNIVERSAL GRAVITATION
Only on Game Boy Advance.
YOSHI'S UNIVERSAL GRAVITATION
OUT 15TH APRIL
TILT SENSOR INCLUDED!
GAME BOY ADVANCE SP
www.nintendo.co.uk
© 2004-2005 NINTENDO. TM AND ® ARE TRADEMARKS OF NINTENDO. © 2005 NINTENDO.



MANGA ME UP, TOMMY!

This being what we like to call a Two-Clancy Month, we were going to pose for a picture wearing authentic Sam Fisher outfits. Unfortunately our hapless reviews editor Geraint managed to get himself arrested on the way to the photo studio, having enjoyed the feel of sweaty rubber on his skin just a little too much. And since his ability to blend in with any surroundings (as long as they're black) renders him a clear and present danger to the general public, we were under executive orders not to post his bail.

So why the unclean love for all things Clancy? Well, now that there are two Toms on the team, there's a 100% greater chance that at least one of us is related to the Great Man, and therefore in line to receive a huge inheritance. Or at least a modest handout. Free game maybe? (not *Ghost Recon 2*, ta).

That's the reason we're appearing as adorable manga-style Nintendo characters this month. Clear as mud, right?

TEAM NGC



SUBSCRIBE TODAY!
Go to page 87 to find out how you can get **NGC** delivered direct to your door, before it hits the news stands. With a free copy of *Viewtiful Joe* too.

WHY WE'RE No.1 FOR NINTENDO

NGC's the result of over a decade of gaming genius – so you're the best-informed Nintendo gamer around.



■ First there was the SNES, and Super Play came out alongside it – fanboys rejoiced.

■ A new machine meant a new magazine – but one with the same high standards.

■ Now we've got Gamecube, and you've got **NGC**. That's 13 years of Ninty love right there.

NGC
INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING
30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW
Tel: 01225 442244
E-mail: *ngc@futurenet.co.uk*

EDITORIAL
Editor Tom East
thomas.east@futurenet.co.uk
Art Editor Paul Edwards
paul.edwards@futurenet.co.uk
Deputy Editor Martin Kitts
martin.kitts@futurenet.co.uk
Reviews Editor Geraint Evans
geraint.rhysevans@futurenet.co.uk
Production Editor Tom Simpson
tom.simpson@futurenet.co.uk

CONTRIBUTORS
Mark Green, Monica Ion, Thomas Wilde, Alvin Weetman, Sophie Mason, Alex Cooke, Mr B L Zebub (driving).

PRODUCTION
Future Plus Buyer Colin 'Call The' Polis
Senior Co-Ordinator Lee Thomas
Production Manager Rose Griffiths
Purchasing Manager Michelle Rogers

CIRCULATION
Product Manager Russell Hughes
Subs Manager James Greenwood

ADVERTISING
Advertising Director Jayne Caple
Advertising Manager Joe Merritt

MANAGEMENT DESK
Publisher Kerry Lawrence
Publishing Director Mia Roberts
Editorial Director Jim Douglas
Overseas Licensing Simon Wear

SUBS & DISTRIBUTION
Future Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST BS4900, Somerton, Somerset TA11 7BR.
Tel: 01458 271184

Distributed by Marketforce (UK) Ltd, 5th Floor, Low Rise Building, Kings Reach Tower, Stamford Street, London SE1 9LS
Telephone 0207 633 3300

Overseas distribution by:
Future Publishing Ltd. Tel: 01225 442244

Printed in the UK by TPL Ltd





Media with passion

BOARD
Managing Director Robert Price
Non-executive
Chairman Roger Parry
Chief Executive Greg Ingham
Group Finance Director John Bowman

Future Publishing Ltd is part of Future plc.
Future produces carefully targeted specialist magazines for people who share a passion. We aim to satisfy that passion by creating titles offering value for money, reliable information, smart buying advice and which are a pleasure to read. Today we publish more than 100 magazines in the UK, US, France and Italy. Over 100 international editions of our magazines are also published in 30 other countries across the world.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FNET).

www.futureplc.com

Future Games: The First Choice For Gamers
This magazine is brought to you by Future Publishing Ltd., the makers of Edge, PC Gamer, GamesMaster, PSM2, PlayStation2 Official Magazine-UK and Xbox World.

gamesradar.com



GUIDE TO WHAT'S
UNMISSABLE
THIS ISSUE!



KILLER 7
BLOOD, FILTH AND GORE
Your grandma wouldn't like it. But we do.



ZELDA
ALL-NEW SCREENSHOTS
A sneaky peek at what's coming in this hotly anticipated addition to the series.

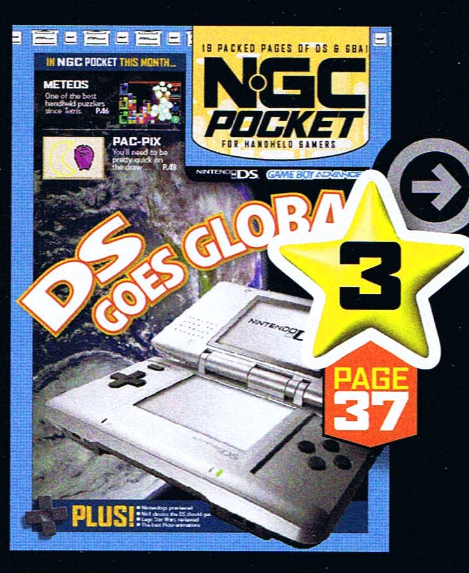
PAGE 18

KILLER 7

■ We break the web of secrecy surrounding the sickest game on 'Cube.







3 PAGE 37

4 PAGE 30



SPARTAN

SEGA'S SLASH-'EM UP

Exclusive first play of *Spartan Total Warrior*, a hack 'n' slasher from the makers of the *Total War* series.

5 PAGE 82

FORGOTTEN ANCESTORS

STEP BACK IN TIME

20 long lost Nintendo prequels and hidden gems.

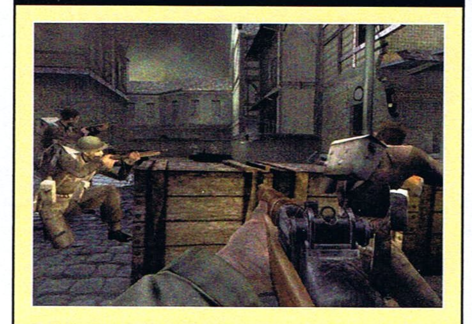
WHAT'S IN NGC?

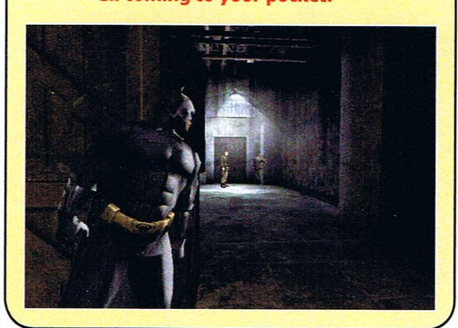


Enough to keep you busy even through Ghost Recon 2's loading times…

PREVIEWS

Amazing new games coming your way.





NEWS

The latest rumours, truths and goings-on.

EXTENDED PLAY

Getting more from your favourite games.



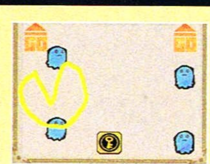


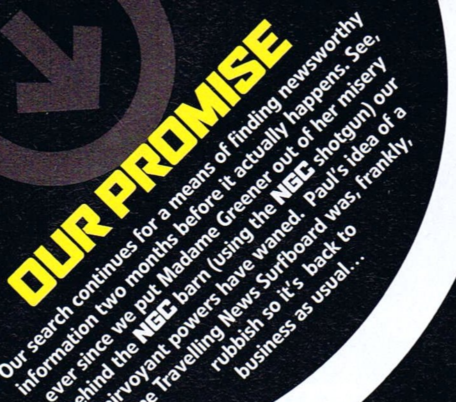


REVIEWS

Ways to blow your hard-earned cash.







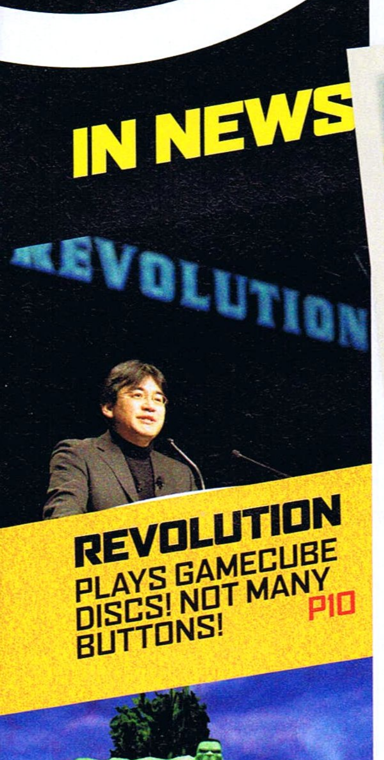
OUR PROMISE

Our search continues for a means of finding newsworthy information two months before it actually happens. See, ever since we put Madame Greener out of her misery behind the NGC barn (using the NGC shotgun) our clairvoyant powers have waned. Paul's idea of a Time Travelling News Surfboard was, frankly, rubbish so it's back to business as usual...

NGC BRINGING YOU NEWS FIRST

NEWSDESK

IN NEWS



REVOLUTION
PLAYS GAMECUBE DISCS! NOT MANY BUTTONS! P10

HULK OUT
HE'S QUITE UPSET ABOUT SOMETHING (FOR ONCE) P12



BRRRRMM!!!
WIN YOURSELF AN ACTUAL CHAINSAW (CONTROLLER) P14

AND MORE...



■ Classic *Zelda*. Lush open pastures, a huge beast to straddle, the feeling of wind up your tunic and rampaging hordes of moblins to batter. Miyamoto always said he wanted to include more in the way of horseback-battling – but the technology behind the N64 wouldn't let him realise his dream. Now, with the added power of Gamecube, Link can ruthlessly swing his sword at chasing goblin bandits with reckless abandon. The most irresistibly enticing thing about this pair of shots though, is what the eye can't see. Are there jaw-dropping surprises waiting in those woodlands? Is some kind of malevolent evil force lurking over horizon? Can Link freely travel there if he so desires? Our finely tuned Nintendo-noses smell 'yes'.

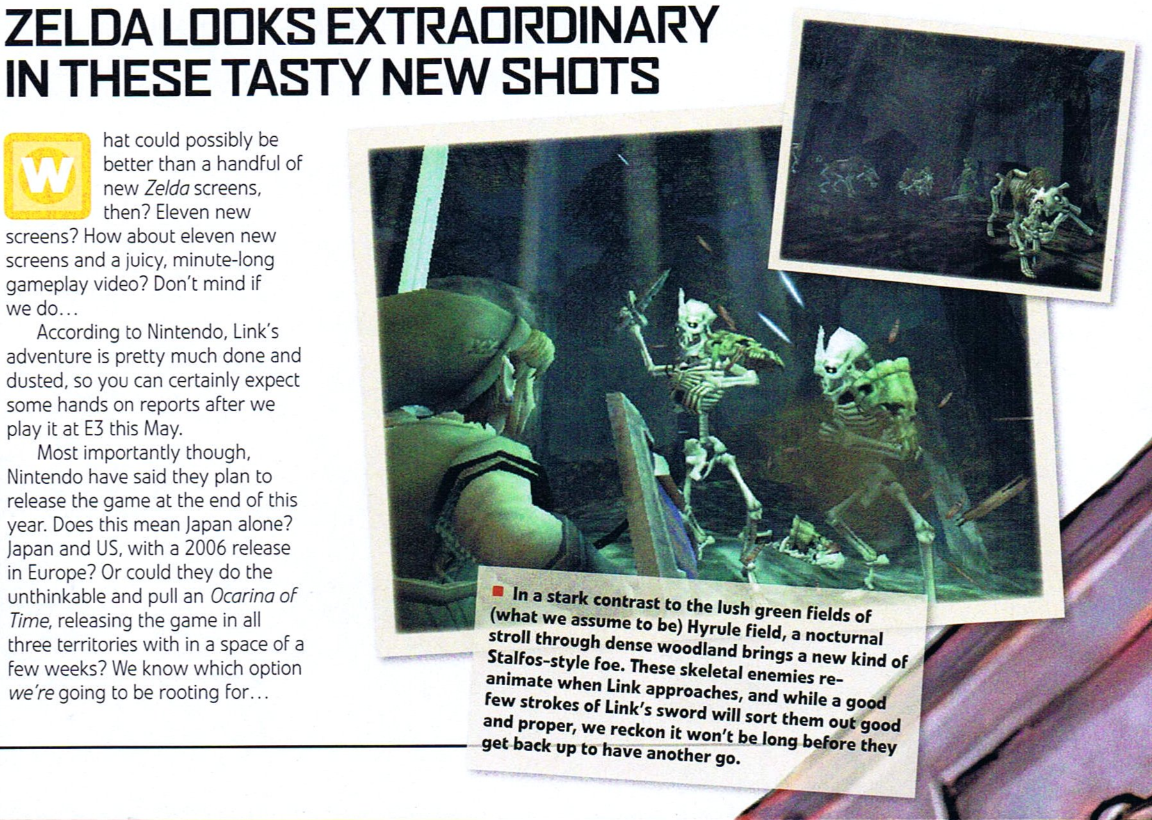
WISH WE WERE HERE...

ZELDA LOOKS EXTRAORDINARY IN THESE TASTY NEW SHOTS

What could possibly be better than a handful of new *Zelda* screens, then? Eleven new screens? How about eleven new screens and a juicy, minute-long gameplay video? Don't mind if we do...

According to Nintendo, Link's adventure is pretty much done and dusted, so you can certainly expect some hands on reports after we play it at E3 this May.

Most importantly though, Nintendo have said they plan to release the game at the end of this year. Does this mean Japan alone? Japan and US, with a 2006 release in Europe? Or could they do the unthinkable and pull an *Ocarina of Time*, releasing the game in all three territories with in a space of a few weeks? We know which option *we're* going to be rooting for...



■ In a stark contrast to the lush green fields of (what we assume to be) Hyrule field, a nocturnal stroll through dense woodland brings a new kind of Stalfos-style foe. These skeletal enemies re-animate when Link approaches, and while a good few strokes of Link's sword will sort them out good and proper, we reckon it won't be long before they get back up to have another go.



One of Kittsy's pet hates – stupid flying enemies that buzz around you causing minimal damage and generally annoying the hell out of you. Thankfully, this bug-eyed bat creature is about to get some first hand experience of Link's handy, lock-on-guided sword swipes.

One thing we wanted more of from *Wind Waker* was dungeons. Although we can't comment on whether this has been rectified, the sight of gloomy chambers, gently illuminated by billowing fires, certainly tickles our excitement. Expect plenty of block-pushing, torch-lighting, chest opening and well... hopefully, some more imaginative features on display.

Out with the flat, stylised blocks of colour from *Wind Waker*, and in with crystal clear H_2O and some lovely refraction effects. The video showed Link diving with little shoals of fish – surely Nintendo wouldn't let the opportunity of a spot of fishing pass them by...

Link faces off against what can only be described as, an unholy union between Baboon and Ewok. If we were gambling men, we'd bet Zelda's unborn babies that slashing him in the head with your sword will relieve him of that nasty boomberang he's packing.

Some new friends for the old Rinky-Dink. In earlier videos, we saw Link hanging around with a bunch of puppies, this time though, we see him rescuing some cats from a gnarled tree. Is this a side-quest perhaps, or is Link just going to drown them in a nearby river for fun? *[Don't make me finish you, Evans – Animal-loving Ed]* We know Miyamoto's gone all soft for domestic animals over the years, so maybe they'll prove to be helpful companions.

Saving the best until last, this shot has to be our favourite of the lot, conjuring up images of the Ents in Lord Of The Rings. Who is this friendly giant? Is that beautiful, sun-kissed clearing his home? Whatever the answer, you can't help but bask in delicate gorgeousness of the scene. Anyone who looks at this picture and doesn't feel even the slightest pang of anticipation, is a truly heartless gamer indeed (or not a Lord Of The Rings fan).

POETRY IN MOTION...

Scene by scene through precious snippets of Zelda gameplay

GORON MY SON

Link goes toe to toe with an angry-looking Goron at sunset. Surely, this must be some kind of training section. Will Link learn some new technique – or is he just going to chop him?

GHOST DRAIN

Link looks around what seems to be an empty sewer, but after a bit of wibblery some ghosts appear. Could Link be in the possession of some kind of Lens Of Truth-style device?

ARACHNO PHOBIA

Shades of Ocarina here, as Link does battle with a spider. And what about that scene with Link riding towards a distant castle? If we're not mistaken, those are bomb arrows he's firing.

RELEASH THE PIGS

Is Link turning his hand to beast-mastery? Can we expect to see him riding any other animals? How about one of those dragons? The ability to fly would be undeniably superb.

THE NGC VERDICT

Mmmm... just about sums it up

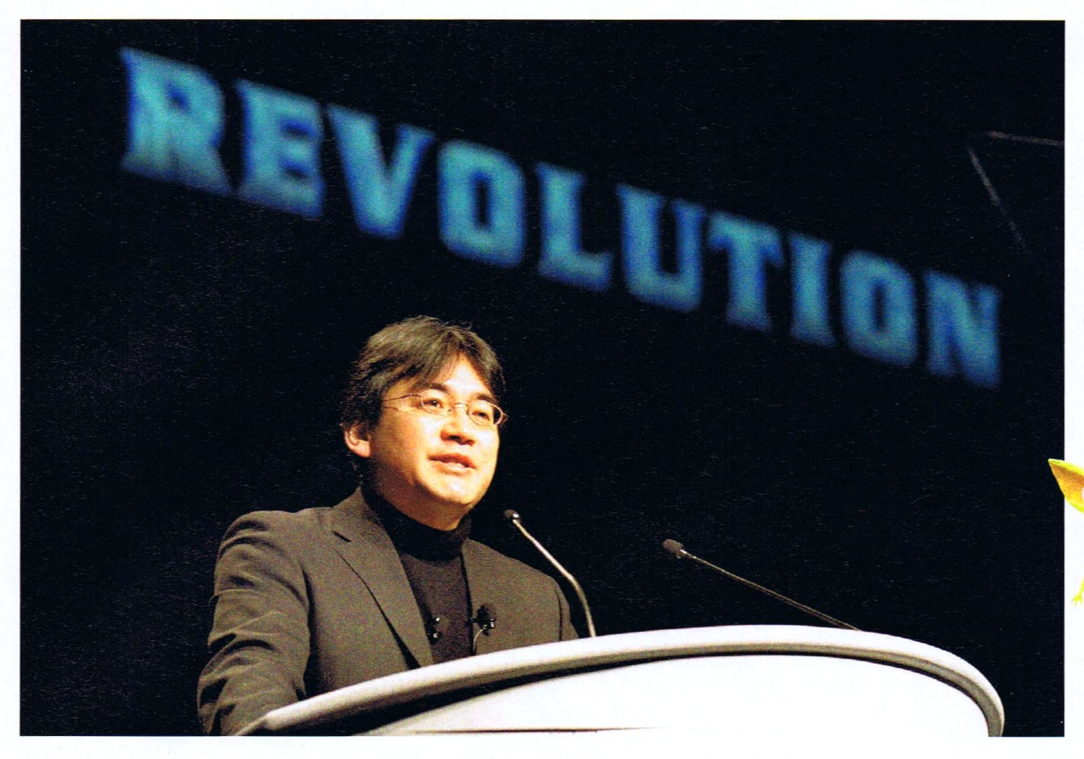
Okay, so maybe 'verdict' is a completely inappropriate word – more so when you consider we haven't actually *played* it – but it would be scandalous not to give some kind of opinion on what we've seen so far. It all looks so reassuringly *Zelda* – like the Gamecube equivalent of *Ocarina of Time* and while we certainly loved *Wind Waker* we have to admit it's nice to see the series heading back in a similar visual direction to its N64 predecessors. The biggest question of course is what the game's unique hook will turn out to be. Going by the trailers and shots we've seen in the past, there's a much stronger animal aspect going on here, with the horse, the gigantic wild boar, the howling wolf, the dragons and those cats. Is this an indication of the kind of overall theme the game will take, or are they just one small facet of the game?

Whatever, it's the seemingly epic scale of the game that's really got us excited. Just take a look at those shots of Link riding around in the field. The horizon seems to stretch on forever – could the overworld really be *that* big? Thankfully we'll only have a few more months before we find out...

YOUR WISH LIST

As ever, we're *extremely* interested to hear your thoughts. If you've not actually seen the new footage, then we suggest you download it from our sister site at www.gamesradar.com before you sit down and wring your brain.

Have a good long think what you want to see in the next Zelda. A full orchestral soundtrack, maybe? A little romance between Link and Zelda perhaps? Epona, roasting on an open fire? Whatever it is, jot down your TOP FIVE ideas and send them to 'My Zelda Wish List' at the usual address. We'll sort out the best ones and print them up *reeeeaaaal* nice.



EASY DOES IT

How Revolution hopes to target people who have never bought a console before (that's the theory, anyway)



The key concept behind Revolution will be simplicity. Speaking to Japan's Nikkei Business journal, Nintendo boss Satoru Iwata said: "A goal of ours with Revolution is to expand the target market for games, because the current consoles are getting too complicated. The number of buttons on controllers has been increasing steadily in recent years, for instance. Hardcore players can still manage, but for inexperienced people and beginners the degree of complexity is too big a barrier."

While we don't expect a return to the NES days of D-pad plus two buttons, it seems as though the Revolution controller won't be another of the button-heavy, PS2-style pads beloved of third-party developers. Mr Iwata's comments definitely lend weight to the various rumours of a programmable touch-screen controller.

> **"FOR INEXPERIENCED PEOPLE AND BEGINNERS COMPLEXITY IS TOO BIG A BARRIER"**

Earlier in the month, speaking at the games developers' conference, Iwata also let loose some more Revolution info.

Most exciting is the fact that the new console is going to be WiFi compatible, so if you have broadband, you'll be able to get your Revolution out of the box and play online straight away.

Iwata also revealed that Revolution will be backwards compatible - running all the current Gamecube titles. So not only will you be able to play Cube games on Revolution, developers could conceivably upgrade Gamecube projects to take advantage of WiFi internet gaming.

We'll be back with more facts rumours next issue.

△ **Satoru Iwata making his Game Developers Conference keynote speech – the first time a Nintendo executive has ever done so. This man has played *Zelda*. Lucky sod.**

SOUL TRADER

Speaking at the Game Developers' Conference, fearsome marketing guru Reggie Fils-Aime said Nintendo will be making a lot more of the kind of deals that saw Mario, Luigi and Peach pop up in EA's excellent *NBA Street V3*. With this in mind, we've come up with a quick NGC wish-list.

PIKMIN

These hardy perennials could conceivably sprout up in any kind of game. Whether it's just the odd 'min hiding in a flowerbed – like in *Mario Golf*, or loads of them making off with carelessly abandoned power-ups – like in no game so far – they're natural choices for converting filthy third-party pellets into piles of lovely cash.

Suggestion box: *Metal Gear, FIFA, Spongebob.*

MARIO

Having whored himself all over the world for the last two decades, few gaming genres have been left untouched by Mario's sinister white gloves. From sports to music to the dreaded 'edutainment', the man has taken his cut from everything bar 'mature' games. We think a Mazza-themed *BMX XXX* remake is long overdue.

Suggestion box: *Hitman, Resi, Duke Nukem*

BOWSER

If there's a better über-villain than this gigantic, fire-breathing tortoise, we've yet to meet him. Bowser would make the perfect rent-a-boss for any game where the developers find their imagination glands running dry after the third level - which is to say, most games. Imagine how much more interesting he'd make EA *Bond* titles...

Suggestion box: *GoldenEye, Star Wars, Turtles*

PEACH

She has a great pair of legs and she isn't afraid to show them off. By shaving a few pixels off the hem of her implausibly short skirt each time she appears in a new game, Peach strikes blow after blow for female emancipation. Go, girl! We'd happily put her in any game where 'totty' is a selling point – and so would Nintendo.

Suggestion box: *Need For Speed, Fight Night, Mortal Kombat*

HEAVEN SENT

A confirmed Geist sighting as Nintendo's eagerly awaited ghost-'em-up breaks cover

After spending most of the last year in hiding (from us, anyway) *Geist* made a rare appearance at the Game Developers' Conference. Currently in production at Florida-based N-Space, the company behind the *Mary-Kate & Ashley* games (eek!), *Geist* was introduced to the GDC audience by Nintendo boss Satoru Iwata. "It will move your emotions and move your definitions of this genre," said Mr Iwata.

You play John Raimi, a disease-control agent who winds up having his soul ripped from his body while investigating illegal experiments at the sinister Volks corporation. After a gun-heavy prologue, during which Mr Raimi is ostensibly killed dead, you continue probing the Volks building as a phantom, possessing people and hopping from body to body, via the occasional inanimate object.

We'll have a detailed preview and playtest of this unusual game very soon. Until then, check out these screens – one of which looks spookily similar to the Carrington Institute from *Perfect Dark*.



△ It's the Carrington Institute, isn't it? Over on the left is the elevator to Robin Williams's office. Uncanny...



△ To our knowledge, the only first-person game to feature dog-walking. Later you *be* a dog.





PORTABLE FAMICOM

There's a new handheld console in town. No, not that one – it's from peripherals specialist Fire International, maker of the Xploder cheat carts, and it's called the Blaze Pocket Fami. As the name sort of suggests, it's a portable NES/Famicom and it plays all US, European and Japanese games on a backlit 2.5" TFT screen. Plus it's only £55 if you order one from the maker's website. It remains to be seen whether Nintendo decides to release the lawhounds, but since the gizmo isn't sold with any games on board and will only play official cartridges, it will probably all be fine. We'll see if we can get hold of one to test how it compares to the NES Classics series on GBA.

POKEMON XD

Reggie confirms Gamecube's monster RPG is on the way



While there's much debate as to what the *XD* part stands for – and it's almost certainly not supposed to be a South Park emoticon with laughing mouth and scrunched-up eyes – we can also be fairly sure it won't be a mere sequel to the monster-battler, *Pokémon Colosseum*.

Nintendo marketing ogre Reginald Fils-Aime confirmed as much at the recent Games Developer Conference in Las Vegas, stating that *XD* will be a completely new game, from the ground up, with a focus on role-playing. Mr Fees-ee-MAY also said that anyone who enjoyed *Ruby* and *Sapphire* will love *XD* - suggesting that we can expect a more traditional RPG experience than the rather basic *Colosseum* offered us.

It's about bloody time too - because this is exactly what Pokémon fans have been crying out for ever since the first GBC adventures.

At the time of writing, there are no new shots available of *Pokémon XD*. However, with the game set for its first public showing at the E3 show in May, ahead of an anticipated November release date, we'll have a hands-on preview very soon indeed.







SMASH BROTHER

Once he advertised sweetcorn. Now look at him – steroids, mate

From the people who brought us the enjoyable, *GTA*-esque *Simpsons Hit & Run* comes what looks like being an enjoyable, *GTA*-esque superhero adventure. A bit like *Spider-Man 2*.

In *The Incredible Hulk*, you can charge around the city like the jolly green giant, demolishing buildings and using the rubble to crush puny humans like ants. You can smash pretty much anything, from cars to mech-suited army blokes, plus there are crime-fighting/causing side-missions to try when you get stuck on the main adventure.

Sounds good, and it's certainly looking far better than it was when we first clapped eyes on it a few months back. We'll take this opportunity to request some fatalities in the game (but there's no chance of getting them). Currently set for a summer release.

△ Hulk smash! Hulk bend lorry in half! If game anything like film, man get out of lorry and Hulk not hurt! Rrrraaaagh! Rah!



△ Hulk scratches an annoying itch between his hairy green cheeks.

SONIC GOES BAD



It seems like blue is *so* last year. In this forthcoming Christmas release from Sonic Team, our favourite fast, blue, talking hedgehog (with red-and-white trainers) takes a back seat and lets his evil counterpart have a crack at starring in a decent 3D adventure.

To emphasise the difference between this and previous instalments in the *Sonic* series, *Shadow The Hedgehog* is mostly black (with a few red highlights) and carries a gun. That's right – instead of rolling on enemies to pop them with his spines, Shadow whips out his piece and puts some hair on the nearest wall. He even has a funky move where he hovers in the air and empties an entire clip in an instant. Rumours that Shadow will be voiced in the style of Ali G are interesting but thoroughly unfounded (since we just started them).

It does look very similar to *Sonic Heroes* at the moment, but the added weaponry will no doubt add a new dimension to the familiar into-the-screen speediness. *Shadow* will be released in the winter.



△ Shadow – the hedgehog with guns. Luckily he can also run fast, so they can reuse an existing game engine. Yay!

SHORT CUTS



NEW GAMES AHOY

Just when we thought we'd have to start counting new Gamecube announcements on the fingers of a giant EA Sports foam hand, French publisher Ubisoft chipped in with four hefty titles.

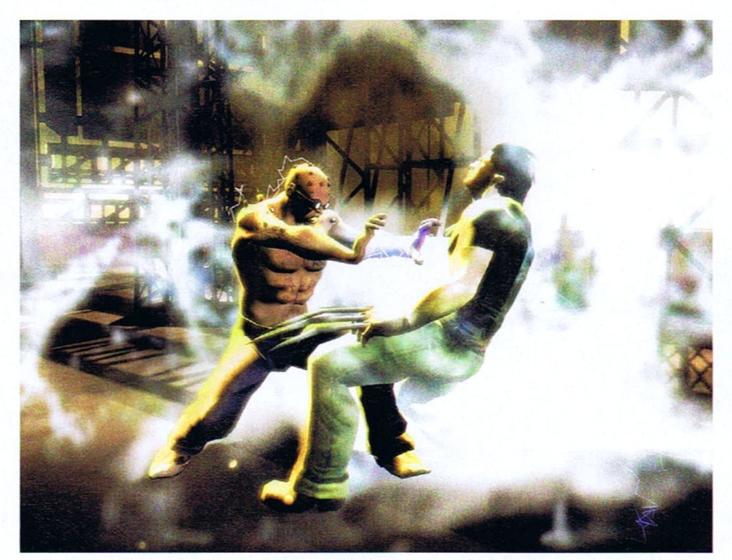
***187 Ride Or Die* is a street racing game, presumably in the style of the all-conquering *Need For Speed Underground*, and is due for release in 'Quarter 2, Financial Year 05-06'. Which is marketing speak for 'late summer'.**

Next up, in 'Q3' of the aforementioned 'FY 05-06' (cripes!) comes *Peter Jackson's King Kong*, based on the movie in which Peter Jackson discovers he is actually King Kong. It's also on DS and GBA, reflecting the cash it must have taken to secure this monster licence.

Around the same time, *Prince Of Persia 3* will swing precariously onto Gamecube. As far as we're aware, it's the only currently active game franchise that began life on the Apple II computer. In 1989. There will also be a DS version of *Warrior Within*, although we haven't been told whether it's a proper 3D effort or one of those side-scrolling jobbies.

Finally, *Splinter Cell 4* has been announced for all current formats and 'next gen' consoles. Don't hold your breath waiting for that one, since it's unlikely to be released until this time next year.


www.nintendo.co.uk
Nintendo
Exclusively for
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
STAR FOX
ASSAULT
OUT 29TH APRIL
© 2004-2005 NINTENDO. © 2004-2005 NAMCO. TM, ® AND THE NINTENDO GAMECUBE LOGO ARE TRADEMARKS OF NINTENDO. © 2005 NINTENDO.



△ If this isn't Niles Van Roekel laying the smackdown on Wolverine, we're obviously not as clued-up on the Marvel universe as we thought we were. Are we right? Yes!

MARVELLOUS

Spider-Man and the gang prepare to meet their nemeses (or nemesises)



At least it isn't known as Marvel vs EA any more. In *Marvel Nemesis: Rise Of The Imperfects*, due for release in time to worry the top the charts next Christmas, some of Marvel's huge roster of famous faces fight brand new characters commissioned by EA. Commissioned from actual Marvel writers and artists, no less. The first to be unveiled is Niles Van Roekel, 'an evil alien scientist out to create a super army of vicious warriors.' Further characters will be revealed each month in the forthcoming Marvel Nemesis: The Imperfects comic book, available on import in May.



△ Spidey looks quite cartoony here.



NGC QUIZ RESULTS

In issue 104 we set you the challenge of completing a ridiculously tough quiz. And while we thought we were being damned clever in devising questions tough enough to ensure nobody got them all correct, Dominic Stroud, James Ballard and Jukka Makkonen each scored 49 out of 50, and earned themselves *Resi 4* Gamecube bundles. Jon Price (48) Andrew Wynne and Chris Richards (both 47) won copies of *Resi 4* as runners-up prizes.

We had loads of entries for this one, and for those of you who didn't win – don't worry, you'll have many more chances. Starting next issue, **NGC** subscribers will receive a slightly customised edition of the magazine, featuring exclusive subscriber-only competitions. Not already a subscriber? Turn to page 87 to find out how you can get your copy of **NGC** delivered direct to your door, days before the mag goes on sale in the shops, and at a substantial discount compared to news stand prices.

If you want to see the correct answers to check how you scored, we've posted them on an internet chat room here: forum.gamesradar.com/viewtopic.php?t=61040&start=0

REV IT UP

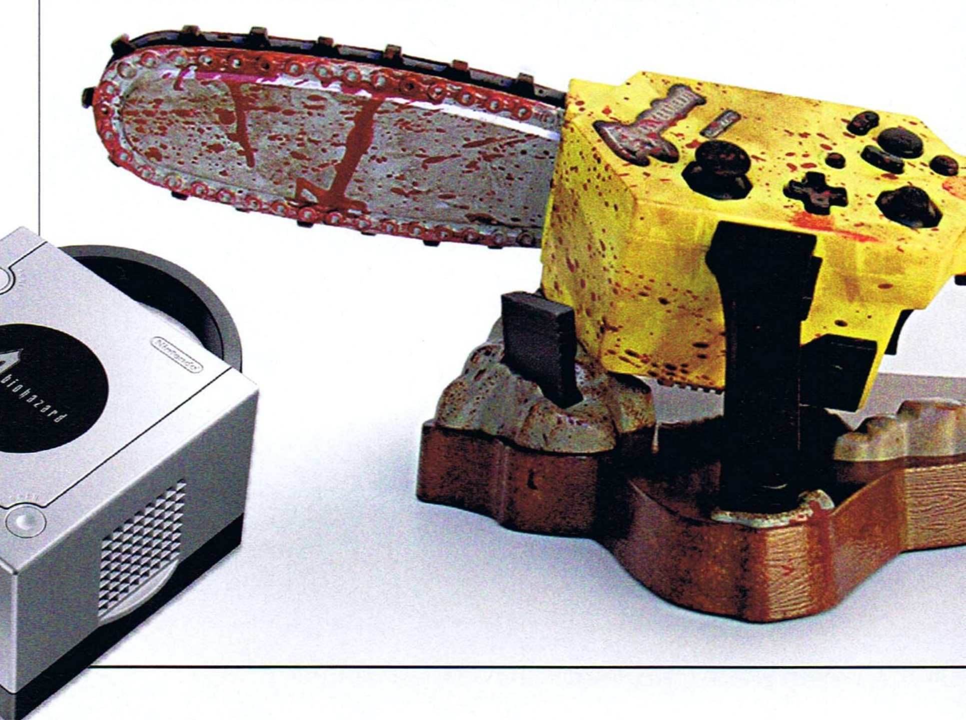
COMPETITION TIME! Win yourself something a bit horrible, very weird and hugely collectable



Fancy playing *Resi 4* using a chainsaw? Rrrrmmm! Actually it isn't all that easy to use, because of the somewhat crazy shape, but it's about as collectable as gaming hardware gets. Each one comes in a special box, styled after the village huts in the game, with a display plinth inside – should you ever decide to remove the chainsaw from its lovely packaging. For maximum aesthetic appeal, the cord is completely detachable and stows in a little compartment underneath the base. The makers clearly knew this thing wasn't likely to get much serious use.

If you can find one of these limited edition conversation pieces at your local shop, expect to pay around £30 (then hoard it). Alternatively, we've got five to give away. To be in with a chance of grabbing one, send us a picture of yourself dressed up like the 'chainsaw dude' from *Resi 4*. The five scariest pictures win!

Send your pics to: Saw-I About The Chain, NGC Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW or email ngc@futurenet.co.uk




NINTENDO DS
GIVE IT THE FINGER!
Get into the game like never before with the Touch Screen of the new Nintendo DS. Get more fun thanks to Dual Screen technology and the integrated microphone.
Plus: get loads of extras like PictoChat for wireless messaging and a demo version of "Metroid Prime: First Hunt."
Now get playing.
WWW.TOUCHMEHERE.CO.UK
TOUCH ME!
12+
www.pegi.info

ULTRA RELEASE LIST

The latest on every Nintendo system game in development – updated monthly!

UK RELEASES

The most accurate listing available – but slippages can occur. We're not psychic, goddamit. All titles Gamecube unless otherwise stated.

MAY

1	Pokémon Emerald (GBA)	Nintendo
1	Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith (DS)	Eidos
6	Kingdom Hearts: CoM (GBA)	Buena Vista
6	Yoshi's Touch & Go (DS)	Nintendo
12	NGC out today!	
13	Need For Speed Underground 2 (DS)	EA
23	Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones (GBA)	Nintendo
31	Digimon World 4	Bandai
TBC	Animaniacs: Lights, Camera, Action (DS)	Ignition
TBC	Bomberman (DS)	Ubisoft
TBC	Care Bears: Care Quest (GBA)	Game Factory
TBC	Herbie Fully Loaded (GBA)	Buena Vista
TBC	Koala Brothers (GBA)	Game Factory
TBC	Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith (GBA)	Eidos
TBC	Ultimate Brain Games (DS)	Telegames
TBC	Ultimate Card Games (DS)	Telegames
TBC	Yoshi's Universal Gravitation (GBA)	Nintendo

JUNE

3	Donkey Konga 2: Hit Song Parade	Nintendo
3	Wario Ware Twisted! (GBA)	Nintendo
7	Chicken Little	Buena Vista
7	Chicken Little (GBA)	Buena Vista
13	Touch! Kirby (DS)	Nintendo
24	Killer 7	Capcom
24	Mario Party Advance (GBA)	Nintendo
24	Madagascar (DS, GBA)	Activision
24	Madagascar	Activision
24	Medal of Honor: European Assault	EA
28	Riviera: The Promised Land (GBA)	Atlus
TBC	Batman Begins	EA
TBC	Dragon Ball GT Transformation (GBA)	Atari
TBC	Megaman Battle Network 5 (GBA)	Capcom
TBC	Sigma Star Saga (GBA)	Namco
TBC	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Chaos Theory (DS)	Ubisoft

JULY

5	Kim Possible 3 (GBA)	Buena Vista
15	Fantastic Four (GBA)	Activision
TBC	Nanostray (DS)	Buena Vista

AUGUST

TBC	Blades of Thunder 2 (DS)	Summitsoft
TBC	Lost in Blue (DS)	Konami
TBC	One Piece (GBA)	Bandai
TBC	Texas Hold 'Em (DS)	Majesco
TBC	Zatchbell	Bandai

SEPTEMBER

6	Cinderella: The Game (GBA)	Buena Vista
6	Lizzie McGuire 3 (GBA)	Buena Vista
6	That's So Raven 2 (GBA)	Buena Vista
TBC	Scooby-Doo! Unmasked	THQ
TBC	Scooby-Doo! Unmasked (GBA)	THQ
TBC	Scooby-Doo! Unmasked (DS)	THQ
TBC	Spartan: Total Warrior	Sega
TBC	SR Monkey Team Hyperforce Go! (GBA)	Buena Vista
TBC	Ultimate Card Games (DS)	Telegames
TBC	W.I.T.C.H.	Buena Vista

OCTOBER

Backyard Skateboarding (GBA)	Atari

SUMMER (TBC)

187 Ride or Die	Ubisoft
Pac-Pix (DS)	THQ
Objection (DS)	Capcom
Lunar Genesis (DS)	Ubisoft
Pac-Man Pinball (GBA)	Namco
Tak 3 (working title) (DS)	THQ
The Incredible Hulk	Vivendi
Yu-Gi-Oh! Nightmare Troubadour (DS)	Konami
Zoo Tycoon (DS)	THQ

AUTUMN (TBC)

Castlevania (working title) (DS)	Konami
King Kong (DS)	Ubisoft
Midway Arcade Treasures 3	Midway
Pac-Man World 3	Namco

WINTER (TBC)

Chronicles of Narnia: LWW	Buena Vista
Chronicles of Narnia: LWW (GBA)	Buena Vista
Chronicles of Narnia: LWW (DS)	Buena Vista
Dragon Booster (DS)	Konami
EverGirl (working title) (GBA)	THQ
Finding Nemo (DS)	THQ
Nicktoons (working title) (DS)	THQ
Peter Jackson's King Kong	Ubisoft
Peter Jackson's King Kong (GBA)	Ubisoft
Peter Jackson's King Kong (DS)	Ubisoft
Prince of Persia 3	Ubisoft
Prince of Persia 3 (GBA)	Ubisoft
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within (DS)	Ubisoft
Snowboard Kids DS	Atlus
Spongebob Squarepants (working title) (DS)	THQ
Texas Hold 'Em (DS)	Summitsoft
The Incredibles 2 (working title) (DS)	THQ
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 3	Ubisoft

YOUR MOST WANTED

Which games are you most looking forward to? Scribble them on this form, cut it out, send it to us and you'll be entered in a prize draw to win a copy of Baten Kaitos.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

Name ....

Address ....

Postcode ....

Send your entries to Your Most Wanted, NGC magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW

NGC MOST WANTED

The games we're dreaming about (and in some cases, playing)...



1 (NEW ENTRY!) THE LEGEND OF ZELDA NINTENDO
Looking better and better with each new set of screenshots and eye-popping video footage. It's the NGC team's odds-on favourite to have the longest queue at E3.
IN A NUTSHELL: The *Zelda* everyone wanted in the first place.

2 (NEW ENTRY!) KILLER7 CAPCOM
Bloodier and filthier than one of Kittsy's 'special' home movies - it's a game that's hard to get your head round. But we can't help but love every minute of it.
IN A NUTSHELL: It's an interactive anime of quite bonkers proportions.

3 (NEW ENTRY!) NINTENDOGS NINTENDO
Three different versions featuring three set of dog breeds, this could be the cutest game ever to be conceived. We reckon this puppy will sell by the sack load.
IN A NUTSHELL: Get a bunch of mutts and poke them with your stylus.

4 (NEW ENTRY!) FIRE EMBLEM: TRAIL OF THE FLAME NINTENDO
For those of you not happy with *Advance Wars'* change of direction, *Fire Emblem* will have to satisfy your strategy needs.
IN A NUTSHELL: *Advance Wars*, with fantasy and RPG trappings.

5 (NEW ENTRY!) SPARTAN: TOTAL WARRIOR NINTENDO
A hack 'n' slasher from the makers of the *Total War* series. Includes screen filling battles of quite epic proportions.
IN A NUTSHELL: Death on a ludicrously large scale. Kittsy loves it.



resident evil™

"Awesome. Magnificent. Monumentally good."
CUBE: 9.8/10

"Astonishing. Beyond anything that we could imagine."
GAMEMASTER: 97%



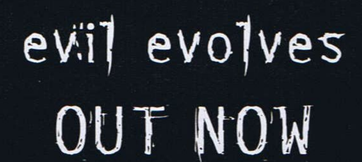


The past is never dead and buried

Leon S. Kennedy has put the past behind him.
He survived the outbreak in Raccoon City six years ago.

Now a government agent, he is sent to a remote European village. there's something wrong with the villagers

The President's daughter has been
- kidnapped
the nightmares never end



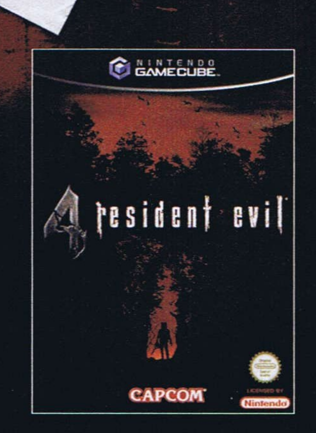
scifiuk.com/evilevolves



res-evil.com\re4



ONLY FOR NINTENDO GAMECUBE





KILLER 7

Lifting the lid on Capcom's secretive cel-shaded shocker

Never have we seen so much of a game, yet *known* so little. It's one of those enigmatic games that – through its distinctive visual style, Capcom's almost obscene level of secrecy and brief flashes of quite disturbing violence – has created something of buzz around it, generating a level of intrigue and anticipation that few other games can match. To say it's a relief to finally get the chance to play it is something of an understatement.

Capcom were gracious enough to let us see more of the game than anyone else, with a five hour, non-stop play through the game's opening three stages which make up the first two levels of the game. And while we're certainly much wiser as to what the game actually entails, the kind of gameplay mechanics that drive the experience and the way the game is structured, it's safe to say that we were left with far more questions than we had answers - it's *that* kind of game. Let us explain...

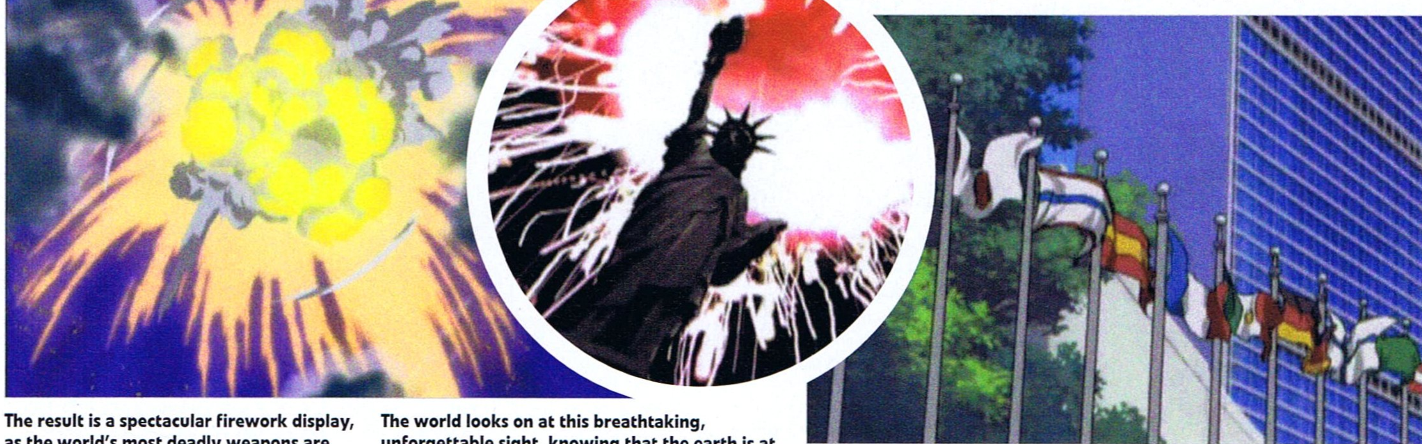
LOST THE PLOT?

For those who like a game with a strong story, *Killer 7* will satisfy your needs. Mainly because the game is more about the story than anything else. If by some twist of fate you've missed any of our extensive coverage in the past, let us bring you up to speed...



The earth is on the brink of world peace. Governments around the globe are disarming their entire nuclear arsenals, ending years of tension.

The plan – to simultaneously launch their missiles beyond the upper atmosphere. Each country will aim their nuclear weapons at the same spot, detonating them when they're in close proximity.



The result is a spectacular firework display, as the world's most deadly weapons are disposed of in the safety of space.

The world looks on at this breathtaking, unforgettable sight, knowing that the earth is at last a safer place...

...or so they thought.



At the dawn of this era, a new threat surfaced – an unknown terrorist organisation lead by a man named Kun Lan.

Kun Lan is using shadowy soldiers infected by something called Heaven's Smile – a seemingly unstoppable terrorist force hell-bent on chaos.



Unable to suppress the threat through the more conventional military tactics of old, a more subtle and sinister plan is put into action...

The world's finest assassins are recruited to pinpoint the terrorists and eradicate them in cold blood.

None are more successful than a mysterious syndicate fronted by Harman Smith – a man with multiple personality disorder.

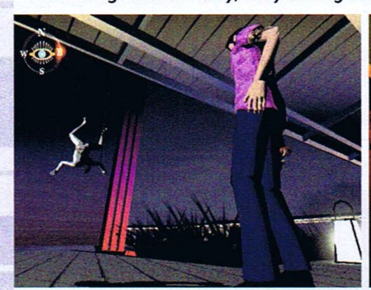
His personalities are uniquely skilled individuals he can call on to do his bidding. An elite, specialist fighting force known as the Killer 7.

HOW IT ALL WORKS

The most important, most frequently asked question has always been 'how does it play?' The answer is right here…

ONWARDS, DRIVER

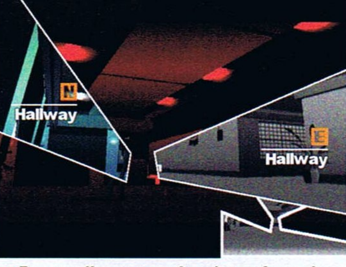
Whatever you thought the game played like before, forget it, it's nothing like you would have imagined. It's very, very strange indeed…













■ You don't have direct control over your character. To move forward, simply hold down A and you'll drive along a pre-determined path. By tapping B you can make your character turn around to go back the way you came.

■ Eventually you reach points where the path branches. Directional options will then divide the screen, indicating where you can move on to. By nudging the analogue stick in the direction of each choice, you can steer your character to a new location.

■ As you progress you'll hear the distinctive cackle of Heaven's Smile. This means there's an enemy in the area. Hold down R and you'll switch to a first-person view. Holding down L scans and reveals the invisible enemies whereupon you just aim and shoot.

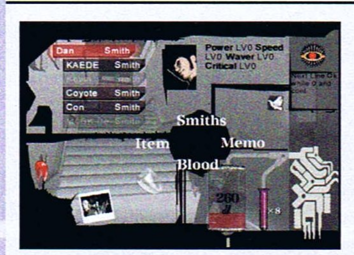
ROOM SERVICE

Take a well-earned break from the 'maddening' crowd…





At intervals through each level, you'll get to enter Harman's Room. This is effectively a safe haven from the madness outside, and a checkpoint for your progress through any given stage. Inside these rooms you'll find Samantha (Harman's nursemaid) and a television set. If Samantha is in her maid's outfit, you'll have the opportunity to save the game, otherwise the room just acts as a checkpoint, letting you start from the last Harman Room you visited before your death.

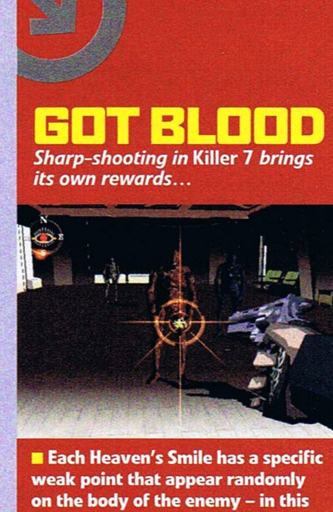


The television set is the main point of interest here though. Each channel on the TV can be tuned in to each personality. From here you can select a personality to change into, level up any specific skills and visit the Blood Room, where a sinister doctor-type will convert thick blood *[see right]* into serum that you can spend on new abilities for the Killer 7. When you first start a new level, not all of the personalities will be available to you. However, when you reach Harman's room, you turn on the TV and wake these dormant personalities for use later in the level.

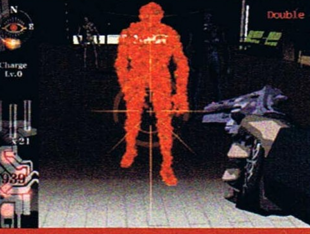
As far as we can tell, this room has a couple of other functions too. The TV set, for example, had a couple of channels that we couldn't tune into during the first two levels of the game. Lord only knows what kind of sick filth Capcom have in mind for their particular programming schedule…

GOT BLOOD

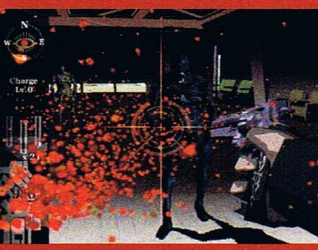
Sharp-shooting in Killer 7 brings its own rewards…



■ Each Heaven's Smile has a specific weak point that appear randomly on the body of the enemy – in this case, on the kneecap.



■ Nail this region to be awarded with a one hit kill. The enemy will burst into a shower of blood. This isn't just for effect though…



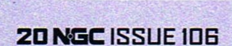
■ The blood from your kill flows into a meter on the right hand side of the screen. This is a resource known as 'thick blood'.



■ When you reach Harman's Room you can separate this blood into Serum and regular blood that can be used to recover health.



■ The serum is of great importance, as it can be spent on levelling up areas for each character, like attack speed and power.

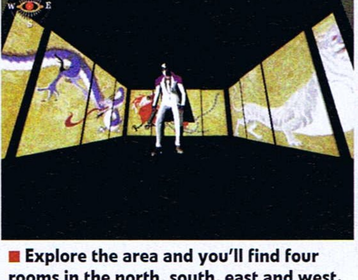


RIDDLE ME THIS...

Wipe the blood off your face and get your thinking cap on. It's puzzle time…



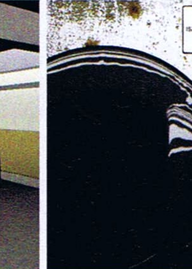
■ This is one of the environmental puzzles. The entrance for this area has a sign with various mythical creatures around the four compass points. What can it mean?



■ Explore the area and you'll find four rooms in the north, south, east and west. By sliding together the correct partitions to form a creature, you'll activate a bridge in the centre.




■ Some puzzles require some keen observation. From this simple poster, depicting the required dice-roll to gain access to a specific item, to more complex puzzles…



■ …Like this series of posters. Here you'll find three ladies in different bikinis and background patterns. A pen and paper comes in handy to record the relevant information.



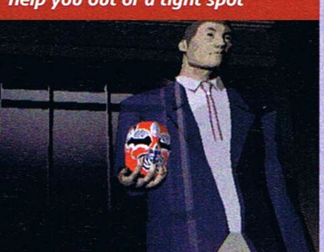
■ Other problems are more traditional, like complex cause-and-effect affairs, spanning multiple rooms, where you trigger a series of events that may reveal a hidden item.



■ These puzzles are reminiscent of the point-and-click adventures of old, or more specifically, in the style of *Resident Evil* puzzles, where 'engraving A' fits in 'hole B.'

BRING OUT THE GIMP

A fearsome foursome of freaks to help you out of a tight spot



Now *this* is properly messed up. Along your travels you'll find a foursome of freaks willing to dispense information through their hideously vocoded voices. Yoon-Kun, Travis, Iwazaru and a demonic child (whose name escapes us) will deliver cryptic lines of dialogue laced with obscure clues to the puzzles ahead. Yoon-Kun for example has a mask. Shoot it and it will pretty much give you the solution to the problem you're facing – although naturally, you have to pay him. In blood. What's even weirder is that these are (from what we could tell) the spirits of people who have been killed by Harman in the past. So quite why they're hanging around giving his schizoid personalities handy hints is anyone's guess.

MASTER OF UNLOCKING

Because sometimes a key just isn't up to the job…



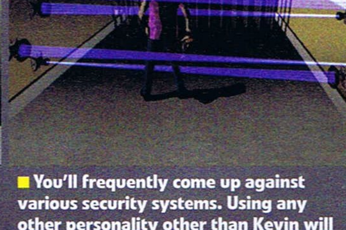
■ Each individual personality has their own set of skills. These frequently come into play when you're trying to get to seemingly inaccessible areas. These cracked walls for example, can only be opened up using Mask's twin grenade launchers.



■ Kaede on the other hand has a far more disturbing means of finding the route ahead. By opening up her wrists and spraying the place with her special blood rain, she can dissolve barriers. She can even suck up blood in order to reveal hidden clues.



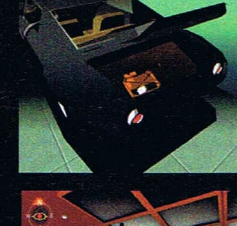
■ Coyote here can use his lock picking skills to open doors and, well, anything with a padlock on it. Apparently he learned this from his time in a 'rough neighbourhood'. How do we know? Well, (no word of a lie) a pigeon told us. No. really.

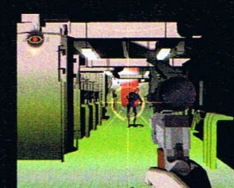


■ You'll frequently come up against various security systems. Using any other personality other than Kevin will trigger them off – the crouching albino assassin on the other hand, can turn himself invisible to cameras and laser beams. Handy.

SOUL ASSASSIN

The puzzles you solve frequently yield Soul Shells. These are special bullets that need to be collected to gain access to the Colosseum – a nightclub-like area guarded by a gatekeeper. It's here that you have to face off against the bosses you'll find at the end of each stage.






KILLER 7

"Has more in common with anime than anything else"



△ Each character has their own specific weapon to use.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

One thing is certain: *Killer 7* is going to divide the gaming community clean in two. Those who get it, and those who don't; or rather, those who *love* it and those who *loathe* it with a passion.

The most obvious source of controversy has to be the control scheme. As we explained over the page, all you do is hold down A to make the character you're using move along a predetermined path, with only flicks of the analogue stick to alter your course – almost like you're driving through the stages. Although, in all honesty, what Capcom have done with the control scheme isn't quite as bold as you may think. Take any adventure you can think of – *Resident Evil, Second Sight, Metal Gear Solid,* whatever – as far as the fundamental basics of character movement is concerned, all you're doing is pushing forward on the relevant control input (making steering adjustments as you go) to guide your character past obstacles and around corners to your desired destination.

Killer 7 works in exactly the same way, only in this case all the donkey-work is done for you. Because you don't have to put anwhere near as much thought into navigating the game world, you can just sit back, relax and enjoy the ride.

And what a ride it is. So strong is its visual style, you can't help but get sucked in. Granted, the plot is completely bonkers, and the opening few hours prove to be incredibly confusing as you try to grasp what the characters are all about and, well, just what the hell is going on. But the stark atmosphere is undeniably tantalising. It's so different that you can't really draw any parallels with any other games. In fact, it has more in common with anime (albeit a heavily interactive one) than anything else. Take the incomprehensibly obscure plot and spartan, bleached-out visuals of something like Serial Experiments Lain, mix that with the brooding, film-noir qualities of something like Golgo 13 and then gloss over it with the kind of stylised artwork you see in Cowboy Bebop's opening credits. If, by some miracle, you can imagine such a fusion, you'll be halfway to picturing the kind of thing you can expect here.

To be honest, aside from the puzzles, the only real major form of interactivity is during the first-person shooting sections. You can actually slip into FPS mode whenever you want to, so at the very least you can take plenty of time to soak in your surroundings, but it's only really necessary when you're under attack from the Heaven's Smiles. These are actually invisible to the naked eye, and you only know they're around when you hear them laugh – at which point you have to scan the immediate area to make them reveal themselves. It's during combat that the differences in personality really come into focus, especially

"KILLER 7 DOES ALL THE DONKEY WORK FOR YOU. JUST SIT BACK, RELAX AND ENJOY THE RIDE..."

△ Heaven's Smiles come in all kinds of shapes and sizes, but each has their...

△ ...own weak spot to exploit. This one has to be turned so you can reach it.



△ We loved the subtle, ghostly exterior of the Fukushima restaurant.

SICK FILTH

Its dirty, it's scary... but we like it

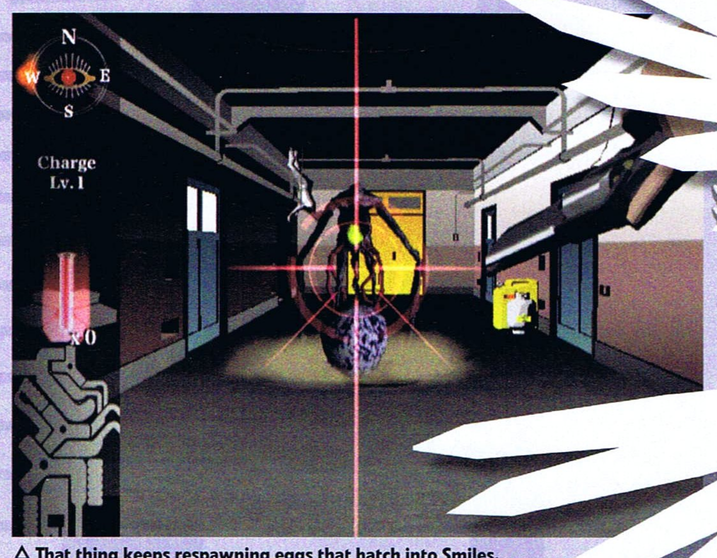
友人の意識を感じた…

食事？

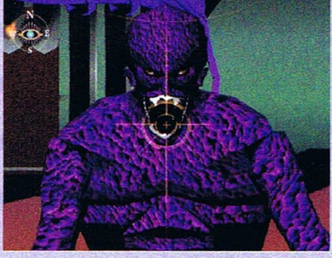
Bet that got your attention. Word is that *Killer7* will get an 18 certificate. Not that it's a cause of celebration, mind you, and we're certainly not going to start advocating violence and sexual deviancy – but you can't really describe *Killer 7*'s sinister atmosphere without touching on the fact that, thematically speaking, it's pretty goddamned *dark*. For example, Harman's nurse, Samantha, when in her maid's outfit is a devoted, caring assistant, but out of uniform she's nothing but vulgar trailer trash who doesn't hesitate in abusing Harman, slapping him around and... er... well, you'll just have to see for yourselves. Other quite disturbing sights include a pair of old men with the tops of their heads sliced open, catapulting their brains at you and the kind of language that would make a Premiership dressing room seem like a nunnery...

KILLER 7

A game unlike anything that's gone before.



△ **That thing keeps respawning eggs that hatch into Smiles.**



△ **This chap's about to bite the bullet. Either that or it'll take his jaw clean off.**

where their weapons are concerned. Kaede for example, (the only female personality) has a gun with a scope, allowing you to snipe from a distance. The pay-off, though, is that she can't take much damage and her reload animation takes forever. Conversely, Con, the blind boy, has a super-fast reload and rapid-fire twin pistols, but accuracy is hardly his forte. From what we could tell, the balance between characters works pretty well, and although you'll quickly gravitate towards your favourite, each personality has its uses in any given situation – especially when it comes to bosses – and by the time you've powered up each individual and earned their special skills, there will be even more room for considered choices when dealing with enemy encounters. So despite its rather rigid and inflexible structure, there's a surprising amount of intensity here. On more than one occasion we were left breathless and strangely panicked by some of the battles. Many of the early puzzles are pretty tough too – and would have certainly had us stumped were it not for the guiding hand of Capcom pointing over our shoulder, hinting at where we needed to go and what to do next. If the game can continue this over the two discs (it's actually a pretty big game) then *Killer 7* promises to be something rather special.



△ **These carrier pigeons give you a different perspective on the *Killer 7*.**

So if you hadn't guessed already, we really like what we've seen so far – although we'd be lying if we said we couldn't hear the inevitable criticisms already. 'But there's no gameplay'; 'all you're doing is pressing A and selecting a destination'; 'it's not really a game, is it?'; blah-dee-blah-dee-blah. But if you ask us, these will be from the same people who thought *Rez* was 'just' an on-rails shooter. The same people who thought *Shenmue* was a whole bunch of crap about stroking kittens and waiting for buses, or that *Phantasy Star Online*, (to quote Kittsy himself) 'was a load of tedious nonsense with numbers floating out of monsters' heads'. Suffice to say, some of you aren't going to like *Killer 7* one bit.

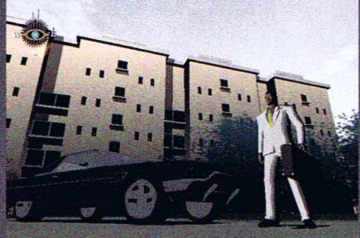
Which leaves the rest of us open-minded folk to embrace, and relish in, this refreshingly original slice of leftfield gaming.

DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD

If things get messy, just call in the cleaner…



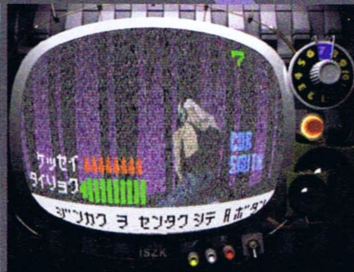
Depending on your character, you can take up to four hits from an enemy. The eye in the top left of the screen shows how much health you have. When it closes, you die.



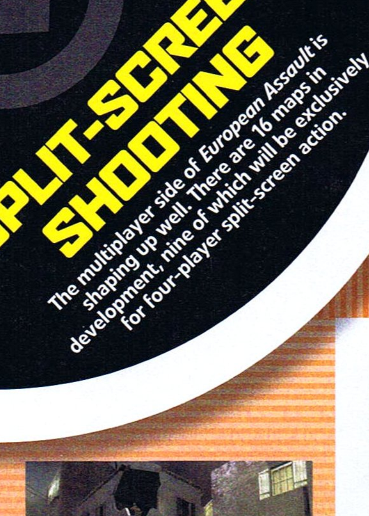
Garcian Smith's primary function is that of the syndicate's cleaner. When you die, you can send him out to retrieve a personality's head – lovingly wrapped in a paper bag.



You then need to get the head back to Harman's room where it can be revived using the television set. Hammer the A button as quickly as possible to bring a character back.



The television tells you how many stabs per second at the A button you need to bring them back. The more times they die, the harder it will be to revive them. Autofire controller, anybody?

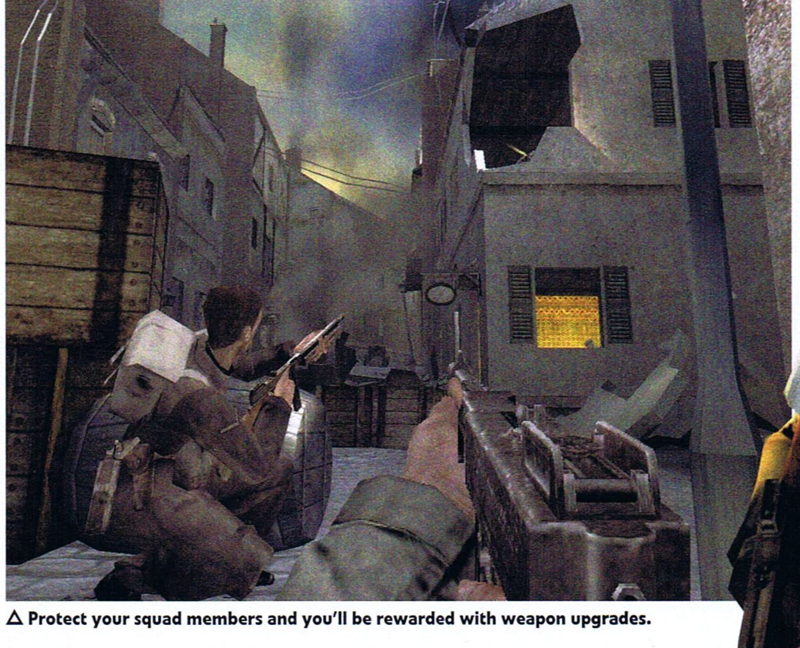


THE KNOWLEDGE

- 12 missions spread across France, Africa, Russia and Belgium.
- Overhauled mission structure lets you roam freely through large map areas and complete the objectives in any order you fancy.
- Basic squad control introduced.
- You play as *Medal of Honor* new-boy William Holt, a secret agent after Nazi atomic weaponry.

FACTFILE

- **Who's making it?** EA
- **What have they done before?**
  Medal of Honor: Frontline (NGC/75 74%)
  Enjoyable but restrictively linear Second World War shooter. Great music, though.



△ Protect your squad members and you'll be rewarded with weapon upgrades.

MEDAL OF HONOR EUROPEAN ASSAULT

At last, a World War 2 shooter that's worth getting excited about.



When was the last time you got really psyched up about the release of a new *Medal Of Honor* title? It's been a while, right? The series hasn't been on top form for quite some time. But according to EA, that's about to change. They reckon *European Assault* is a major step forward and a massive improvement on its lacklustre predecessors.

Still, don't expect a ground-breaking storyline. This time you're William Holt, an agent of the Office of Strategic Services (the organisation that was later to become the CIA) and you travel through various World War Two hotspots shooting down Nazis.

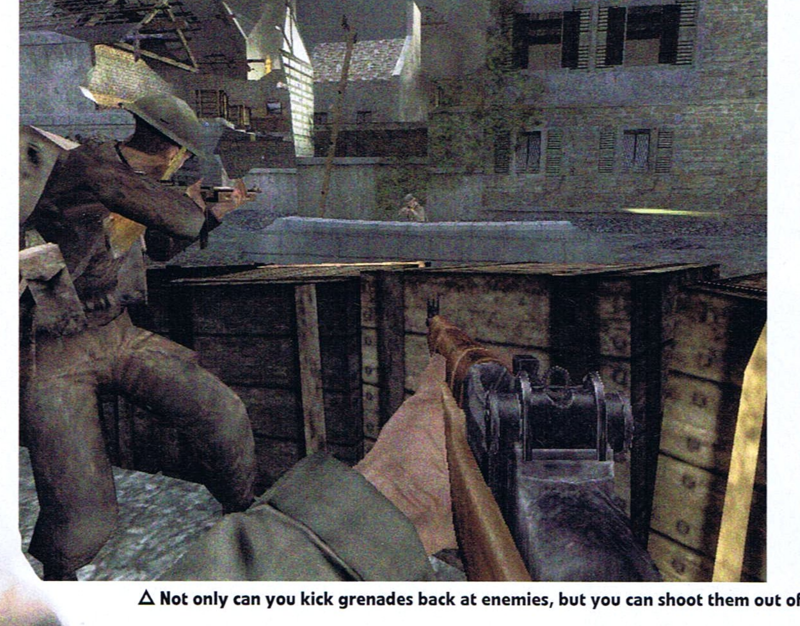
Although there's nothing new going on here, the plot does bring a certain freedom as Holt's secret service duties take him through real-life battles in France, Belgium, North Africa and Russia.

> "WHEN IT COMES TO PLAYING THE GAME, IT LOOKS LIKE A GENUINE IMPROVEMENT"

Each locale hosts three missions, with Holt moving from place to place on the trail of secret Nazi atomic technology, and playing a key role in a series of conflicts and operations taken from real history, such as Stalingrad and the Battle of the Bulge.

So it all sounds similar, but when it comes to playing the game, what we've seen has been encouraging and it looks like a genuine improvement has been made. In the opening level, for example, our man Holt joins up with British forces attacking the occupied French port of St Nazaire. It's an absolutely cracking in-game set-piece and it's definitely up there with the D-Day mission in *Medal of Honor: Frontline*.

In real life, St Nazaire was an important target for the Allies because it was the only port big enough for the near-indestructible German battleship Tirpitz. Unable to defeat the ship at sea, Allied Command decided to prevent the Germans from using the Tirpitz in battle by steering a ship loaded with explosives into the harbour, thus taking out the docks.







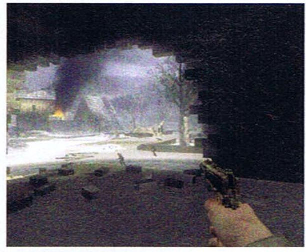
Δ Not only can you kick grenades back at enemies, but you can shoot them out of their hands.



Δ With up to 50 enemies on screen at once, this will be more intense than *Rising Sun*.



Δ Great rocket launcher, but you can only carry two weapons at once.



Δ With its derelict cities, *MOH: EA* does a good job of recreating WW2.

In *European Assault*, the attack takes place under the cover of darkness, and, as we've come to expect from *Medal Of Honor*, the action is frantic from the off. The alarm is raised as your ship approaches the docks and all hell breaks loose – sirens sound, German planes are scrambled and you come under heavy fire. With more enemies on screen than ever before, it is fast and furious stuff.

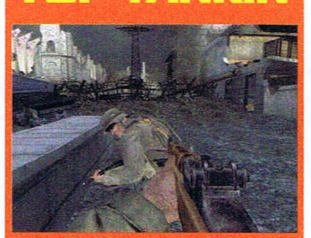
Plus, it's immediately clear that the game has developed visually. The detailed environments – in this case harbour warehouses, crates and gun emplacements – look more solid and realistic than before. In fact, graphically, *European Assault*'s opening scenes are a treat with rich, glowing explosions punctuating St Nazaire's shadowy docks and dazzling tracers filling the skies. Once you've found your bearings on the dock and gathered together your squad members, the mission proper begins.

Yes, that's right. For the first time in the *Medal Of Honor* series, you're in charge of your own squad of soldiers. It's a pretty revolutionary inclusion, seemingly introduced to keep pace with the likes of *Rainbow Six* and the *Conflict* series.

If you're worried that this will slow the action down or make things too fiddly, fear not. EA have been careful not to make the control system too complicated. Only basic commands have been put in, and they're limited to simple directions like 'move here' or 'stay there'. There's even an option to turn it off altogether.

It feels balanced and smooth. When you look at a member of your squad, a star appears over his head letting you know he's

TOP YANKIN'



Tired of always fighting wars as gruff GI types? So are we. Frankly, we'd like to play as a Brit every now and again. Hell, even a Rusky would do. Don't hold your breath, though. EA has no plans to go multi-cultural on us. How do we know? Because we asked them. Sigh.

TAKE TIRPITZ

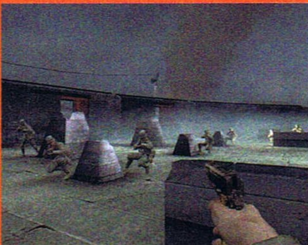
Kicking off in St Nazaire, *European Assault's* opening level is as explosive as Pearl Harbour in *Rising Sun* and the D-Day landings in *Frontline*.



■ As soon as you get to the harbour, the sirens wail and it all kicks off. Now you've got to find your squad members and the battle begins. Hopefully this frantic pace will be kept up throughout *European Assault*.



■ Seeing as you can turn off the squad commands, this is pretty basic stuff. But having mates around you does make it more realistic. As if you would take on the Nazis on your own...



■ Having said that it looks as though you could do with some squad mates to help out here as it's you against five German soldiers. They've got machine guns, but you've only got a crap pistol.



△ Watch out for snipers leaning out of the windmill windows.



△ With planes exploding and guns going off everywhere, the opening level is a blockbuster.

available for instructions, and delivering orders is quick and simple. You're rewarded at the end of each mission for every team member that survives – a nice touch that encourages you to look after your boys rather than using them as human shields.

Now your unit's all geared up and ready to continue, but where will you go? In previous *Medal of Honor* games you wouldn't have had a choice as linear missions and poor level design saw you trudging through one set objective after another. But squad control isn't the only big change introduced in *European Assault*. Missions are now played out on large, open maps that you can explore freely.

There are, for example, multiple routes through the dark, labyrinthine quayside at St Nazaire. On your way through you'll see pathways with varying degrees of cover and even hidden passages and alleys. You begin each mission with a list of objectives to complete but, aside from the opening and closing encounters, you're free to choose in which order you wish to tackle them, and which path you want to take through the new, larger levels.

The freedom this provides is refreshing, but we found that there's a tactical side to it. For instance, you can choose to take on the tougher objectives first, when more of your squad is likely to be alive to help, or you can bide your time, gathering better weapons and getting more familiar with the area. Then, when you know what's going on, you can start sending in your troops to fight in one area while you take on some other enemies.

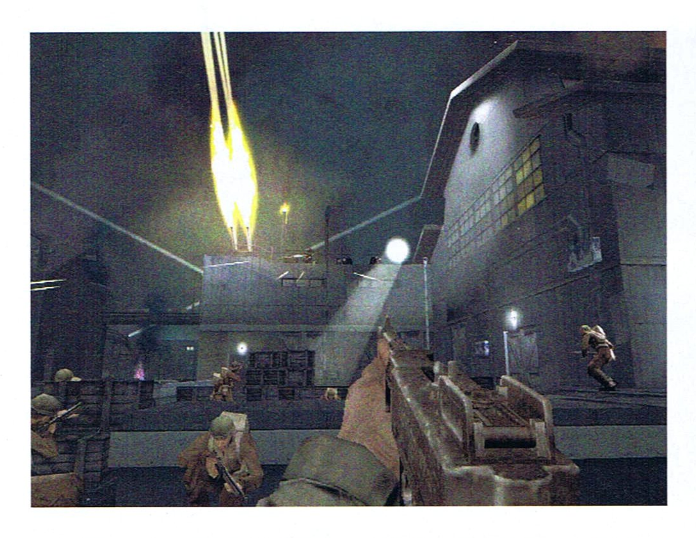
So, squad control and freedom of movement are the most obvious additions to *European Assault*, and very welcome they are too. But as you navigate your way through the docks, ordering your guys to advance from cover position to cover position among St Nazaire's crates and broken walls, you'll notice that a bunch of smaller

"MISSIONS ARE PLAYED OUT ON LARGE, OPEN MAPS THAT YOU CAN EXPLORE FREELY"

MY HERO

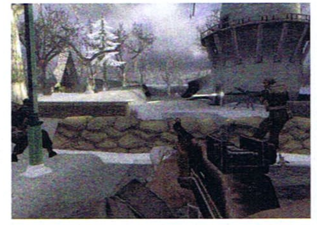


The idea of the rally mode is to make you feel like you're the most kick arse soldier in the world. But in reality it's all a bit arcadey as you have to fill up an on-screen rally bar to get one-hit one kill bullets and invincibility. To fill the bar you'll need to do something dashing and heroic – such as shooting a German geezer in the face, for example. When the bar is full, you can go on a shooting spree.





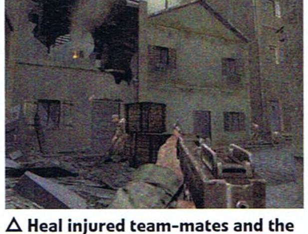




△ The enemies are sneaky and will hide behind walls and sandbags.



△ Take up strategic positions and gun down the German soldiers.



△ Heal injured team-mates and the rally bar will fill up.



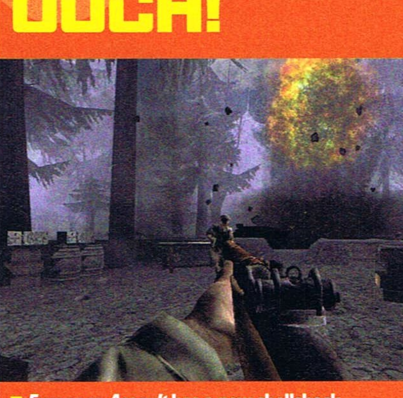
changes have been made as well. Some of these are better than others. For instance the rally mode, which attempts to recreate the sensation of being in the zone during combat, doesn't do it for us. Much better, though, are the vastly improved melée attacks, which feel more realistic and really give the impression that you're dishing out a good thumping.

Other new abilities – like kicking grenades back at enemy soldiers and the option to crawl, not just crouch, also help to give *European Assault* a truly rounded more considered feel.

That's pretty much how the game feels as a whole: rounded and considered. EA have clearly taken the volumes of criticism of the series to heart, and have carefully addressed the major problems that many players had with the earlier games.

From what we've seen so far, it seems to have paid off. *European Assault* is fresher, more open and more intriguing than we thought. It's looking better than *Frontline* and *Rising Sun* already, and while we're still cautious as to how things will come together in the final game, for now our hopes have been raised. This could very well be the best *Medal of Honor* game yet.

OUCH!



■ *European Assault* has a new shellshock effect. When Gerry lets off an explosion in Holt's vicinity, his hearing and vision will go wobbly for a few seconds while he regains his bearings.

■ Things are balanced up, though, with regional damage for enemies. That means if you shoot a German in the knee, for example, he'll go down clutching his leg. It's not so much useful as it is fun to watch, but hey…



UK SUMMER | US SUMMER | JAPAN TBC



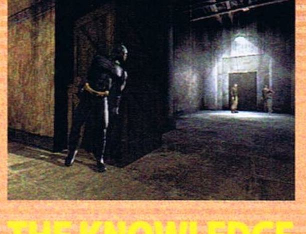
Given the poor reception received by *Rising Sun*, EA needed to do something special to get people to sit up and pay attention to *European Assault*. They've done just that. Increased complexity and freedom, with a smoother look and feel to the visuals, give this a chance of turning *Medal Of Honor*'s ailing fortunes around. We're intrigued.

ANTICIPATION RATING







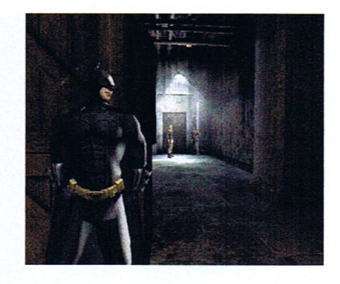



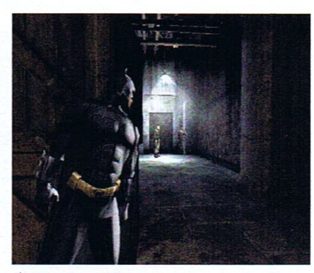
THE KNOWLEDGE

- The game follows the plot of the film, and is voice acted by Christian Bale, Michael Caine and Morgan Freeman.
- This is far darker than previous games and Batman has to rely on stealth to survive.
- There are nine levels, including one in the Arkham Asylum.

FACTFILE

- **Who's making it?**
  Eurocom
- **What have they done before?**
  Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (NGC/75 75%)
  Attractive and competent adaption of Potter's film.





△ It's Sam Fisher in a bat costume. Sneak with your back to the wall.

BATMAN BEGINS

The caped crusader returns. And for once you should care...

We know. It's Batman. Try to ignore the fact that in our top ten list of worst games we'd seen on Cube or N64 (NGC/100) the dark knight wasn't just in there once, but twice with *Batman of the Future* and *Batman Dark Tomorrow* both on the receiving end of our vicious bile.

Forget any preconceptions you may have of Bruce Wayne's games because this is looking like one of the surprise hits of the year. The reason for this is simple - *Batman Begins* is looking like *Splinter Cell* set in Gotham. This should come as no surprise as the writer of *Splinter Cell* and *Pandora Tomorrow* has been working on the story here, which sees Bruce Wayne learn to become a crusader against evil.

With Gotham being as dark and gloomy as the new movie, the stealth action works perfectly. The level we played, set in the Gotham Tenements, had our hero using his grappling hooks to get to the top of a block of flats before attempting to take out a group of enemies below.

Without any special powers as such, you have to scare the crap out of the enemy before knocking them out with a quick combo.

First you should use bat vision, which enables Batman to see enemy heart rates or any weapons they are carrying. Then, when you've done that, you can start worrying them.

> "BATMAN BEGINS IS LOOKING LIKE SPLINTER CELL SET IN GOTHAM."



△ You can lob smoke bombs before dropping down to deck the criminals.

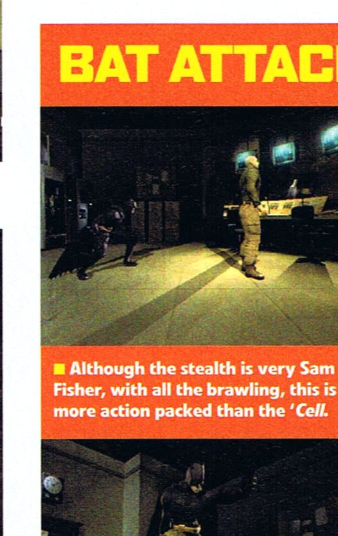


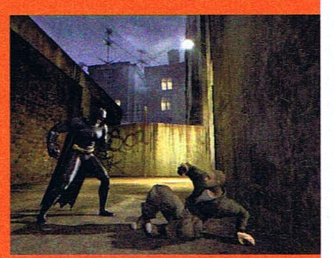


△ Pick up a criminal by the throat and interrogate him for information.

BAT ATTACK

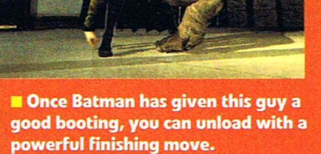
Like in the comics, Batman is a master fighter.





■ Although the stealth is very Sam Fisher, with all the brawling, this is more action packed than the *'Cell*.

■ If the enemy's heart rate is pumping, you'll find it easier to beat the crap out of them.





■ Once Batman has given this guy a good booting, you can unload with a powerful finishing move.

■ If you're getting a kicking, you can do a ground sweep before getting up and booting in the baddies.

Lob a couple of batarangs to create huge explosions or use an HF Transponder, a sonic device that attracts a swarm of bats. Then, when one enemy is scared, others will start getting frightened, causing lesser foes to drop their weapons. When this happens, leap down four storeys (thank the lord, or rather Alfred for Batman's cape) and kick their arses.

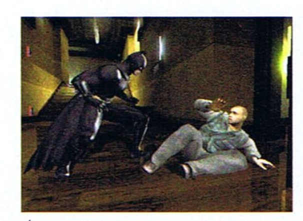
Even better, if an enemy has some information that you need, you can grab them by the throat and interrogate them. As you progress through the nine levels, clearing the streets of evil, your reputation meter will increase and you will be scaring pathetic enemies easily.

While the fighting system looks pretty simple, the stealth is more advanced. Without super-powered weapons, Batman needs the full array of stealth skills. One section we played was straight out of the the opening level in the first *'Cell* as we shimmied up a pipe and crept along ledges watching out for enemies. Then we used an optical cable to spy on enemies behind a closed door.

Whether *Batman Begins* will get close to being as good as *Splinter Cell* remains to be seen, but one thing is certain; unlike *Batman Dark Tomorrow*, this won't be like having skin flayed from your fingertips.



△ Batman goes to Arkham Asylum to release the inmates.





△ For the criminals in Gotham, Batman is like a mythical figure, an urban myth. So when he turns up, they get really really scared.

NGC VERDICT

UK JUNE 17 | US JUNE 17 | JAPAN TBC



We never thought we'd see the day. We may be witnessing the first good Batman game. Not only does this follow the film's plot, but the atmosphere is spot on as Batman creeps around Gotham, taking out enemies. The early level we saw looked great, if a bit easy, but if the rest of the nine levels are more challenging, this could be a big summer hit.

ANTICIPATION RATING





△ Eat my sword, you horrible Roman cad. My mother would *never* do those things.



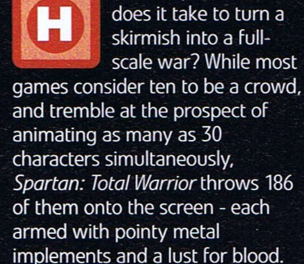
SPARTAN TOTAL WARRIOR

Greek mythology meets the Roman army in the busiest fighting game ever made.

WHO FROM?



Creative Assembly, a recent acquisition for Sega Europe, is the developer behind this and the *Total War* series for PC. The company originally made PC conversions of Amiga games such as *Stunt Car Racer* and *Shadow Of The Beast*, before turning its hand to EA Sports titles – where it was responsible for the first *FIFA* game with real commentary.



How many combatants does it take to turn a skirmish into a full-scale war? While most games consider ten to be a crowd, and tremble at the prospect of animating as many as 30 characters simultaneously, *Spartan: Total Warrior* throws 186 of them onto the screen - each armed with pointy metal implements and a lust for blood. This incredibly busy battlefield quickly becomes strewn with corpses, as the Spartan army and its Roman counterpart hack soldier-sized lumps from one another. The camera zooms out to reveal further 10-a-side melées taking place around the parapets of a city-fortress that stretches as far as the eye can see, while invaders climb siege engines to spill over the walls.

If that isn't war, it must at least constitute a noteworthy international incident. Not that the history books would reflect this, as Sparta had long since declined by the time the Roman Empire was in its prime, but historical accuracy

> "SPARTAN THROWS 186 BLOODTHIRSTY WARRIORS ONTO THE SCREEN…"

"Part beat-'em-up, part squad-based adventure"

SOUL GLOW

How to murderlise and destructificate with the greatest of Greek ease…

Scoring successive hits raises your adrenaline meter, enabling you to pull off some fancy moves such as decapitations and skewerings. So that you don't have to keep referring to the meter to see when you have a special move available, your shield glows gold – a suitable cue for any nearby Romans to start running, if they have any sense.

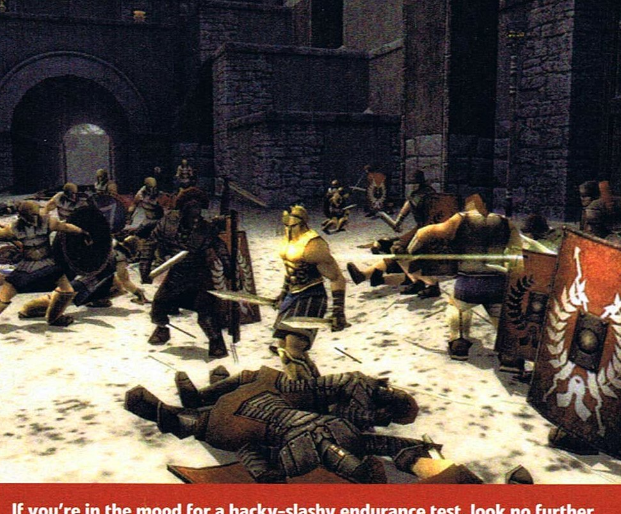
△ All the houses in the background are 3D models rather than painted scenery.

△ Say hello to Talos, the most treacherous bronze statue ever built by the Spartans.

△ Looks like somebody has launched a guided missile. Missed him by miles, though.

ARENA MODE

Hone your skills in manly combat with hundreds of Romans, then kill even more of them in the main game.



If you're in the mood for a hacky-slashy endurance test, look no further than Arena mode. Here you're thrown into a gladiatorial contest against endless waves of enemies, which you fight until you run out of health. Custom options allow you to specify the number of simultaneous opponents and allies, as well as the types of enemy you'll face.

isn't a concern in this game. Despite coming from the same studio as the super-authentic *Total War* PC series (as seen on BBC2's Time Commanders), this console-only effort is pure fantasy, with mythical monsters and walking statues wreaking havoc on the human warriors.

You play a single Spartan commander, backed up by a huge army which rumbles in search of Romans, pretty much under its own steam. It's part beat-'em-up, part squad-based adventure, with sheer, breathtaking scale setting it apart from most other games of its type.

One early scene sees your army defending a city from within, repelling the Roman invaders as they scale the walls. While you run from objective to objective, supporting sappers in their attempts to demolish the enemy scaffolds, breaches along the length of the wall will be dealt with by your spare troops.

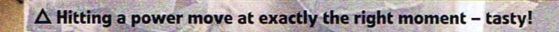
Without assistance the Spartans will eventually be overwhelmed by the Romans. You'll have to hack and slash your way through the crowd, destroying the most immediate threats before refocusing your attention on the current mission objective.

Coloured bars at the side of the screen show the relative strength of the opposing forces that are attacking you, and if the Romans start to gain the upper hand you'll find the game's difficulty level

SPARTAN TOTAL WARRIOR

History lessons were never like this…





△ Hitting a power move at exactly the right moment – tasty!



△ Bodies flying everywhere, buildings burning, people fighting… It's like New Year's Eve in Nottingham.

increasing considerably, and it's up to you to keep the meter down.

At least you have the Greek gods on your side to even things out just a little. Depending on how you play the game, various deities will bless you – for example, helping allies will please goddess of arts and crafts (and a bit of killing) Athena, while exterminating multiple enemies in an orgy of decapitation will make war god Ares your best buddy. When you've accumulated enough god power, attributes such as combat strength and special moves will be boosted.

"EXTERMINATING ENEMIES IN AN ORGY OF DECAPITATION PLEASES WAR GOD ARES"

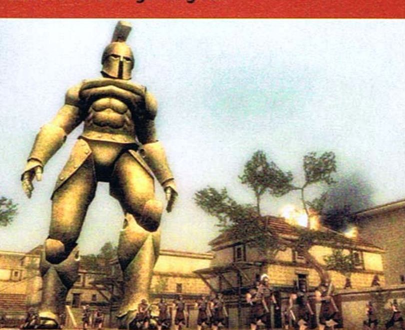
The fighting system is simple and versatile. With an item in each hand – sword and shield, twin swords, dual-handed hammer and so on – you have two basic attack buttons. Hitting one of these makes your Spartan hit the nearest enemy. Hold the 'range attack modifier' button while doing this and you might attack multiple enemies using a roundhouse swing, or perform a finishing move.

Then there's a power move modifier for calling in a godly favour or two. For example, firing a bow using the range modifier will shoot three flaming arrows – add the power modifier and you'll see electric energy sparking through whole groups of enemies, weakening them to the point where your allies can dispose of them without further assistance.

There are five types of weapon in all, plus a shield that can be used as a battering-ram for knocking Romans to the ground or, when powered up, bumping them over precipices. Once you've added other weapons to your basic inventory of sword and shield, you

BOSSY

When historical accuracy gets sacrificed on the altar of console gaming fun.



There are plenty of special enemies serving as gatekeepers to certain parts of the levels. A fight against the man-beast Minotaur was impressive, for gameplay's sake taking place in a huge hall filled with columns, rather than a more authentic maze. The columns obscured enough of the view that your only warning of an impending mauling would be the sound of thundering hooves from somewhere uncomfortably nearby.

We also saw a battle with the Medusa, a snake-haired Gorgon who with a mere gaze turns soldiers of any allegiance into stone statues. Plus there's a vast bronze statue called Talos, which looks like a Spartan warrior but is somehow animated by the Romans. So it isn't all about human versus human.



△ Using the hammer calls for a completely different style of fighting.

△ During an actual game, they don't all stand around posing for the camera. They kill! Kill!

△ Surely the spike on the end of the shaft is a little redundant, given that giant blade.

MISSION ACTION

It isn't all hack and slash – sometimes it's hack and bomb; other times it's slash and decapitate. Good Spartan fun.

Your objectives are displayed on a compass in the corner of the screen, much like in *Call Of Duty*, so you're in no danger of getting lost during a level. From time to time you'll have to leave your comrades to fend for themselves, as you embark on a lone commando mission – for example, taking out some Roman ballista artillery that's keeping your troops pinned down on the battlefield.

can switch between them as you see fit – in the heat of a battle, if you like, or to cope with specific types of enemy.

When you're running low on health, you might prefer to switch to a ranged weapon and chip away at the enemy forces. Alternatively, you might find your fighting style is better suited to the slow, powerful swings of the dual-handed hammer, in which case you'll probably stick with it for the majority of the game.

Whatever you choose, there's no need to learn new combos and controls, since the buttons always retain the same functions no matter which weapon you have equipped.

> "WOUNDED ENEMIES TRY TO CRAWL AWAY FROM DANGER, UNTIL YOU FINISH THEM"

There are also fixed artillery emplacements which fire arrows at a strictly non-historical rate and power. These ballista weapons are used for heavy assaults or, from time to time, mowing down entire columns of advancing Roman soldiers. Which is, of course, fun.

△ Relaxing with the popular Spartan game of Poke The Fat Bloke With Pointy Sticks Until He Gets Really Annoyed.

△ The sound effects go: Crunch! Ker-ching! Where's my arm gone? Aiiiieee!

△ Actual in-game screens have health bars, scores and other displays. This is just posing.

Being such a busy game, you might expect defeated foes to disappear as soon as you knock them down, but thankfully this isn't the case.

Mortally wounded enemies will attempt to crawl away from danger, which is your cue to run them through before they find medical assistance. Bodies don't fade and vanish, so after a long battle the ground will be littered with bloody testaments to your skill and swordmanship.

The only time we noticed any vanishing corpses was when they had been blasted into tiny chunks by some sort of explosive weapon.

Roman commanders are among the 60 types of enemy included in the game. They're easy to spot during a battle, thanks to the red chevrons floating above them, but require an entirely different disposal technique from standard, foes. Since they're capable not only of blocking attacks, but also using god powers of their own, you need to do a spot of *Wind Waker*-style lock-and-roll manoeuvring before you can land a blow.

The action takes place in locations ranging from the Barbarian wilderness to the catacombs under Rome itself, and the size of the levels is always impressive - particularly when you consider the fact that once each level has loaded, there are no further interruptions until you've made it to the end.

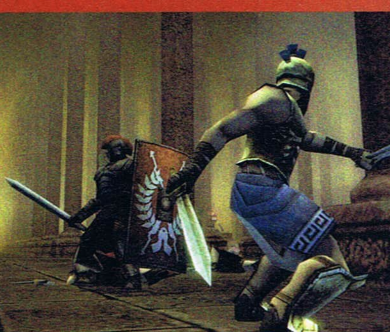
Despite the massive environments, very detailed architecture, huge armies and a complete lack of fogging or pop-up, we're promised the finished game will run at a consistent and smooth 60 frames per second. Even in the demo version we saw, there were, surprisingly enough, only the briefest of stutters during a couple of cutscenes.

That's a feat of programming expertise made possible by the creation of a dedicated engine (unlike most multi-console titles, it isn't running on middleware) for this and future games in the *Total Warrior* series. Not to mention the two-and-a-half years Spartan has already spent in secret development.

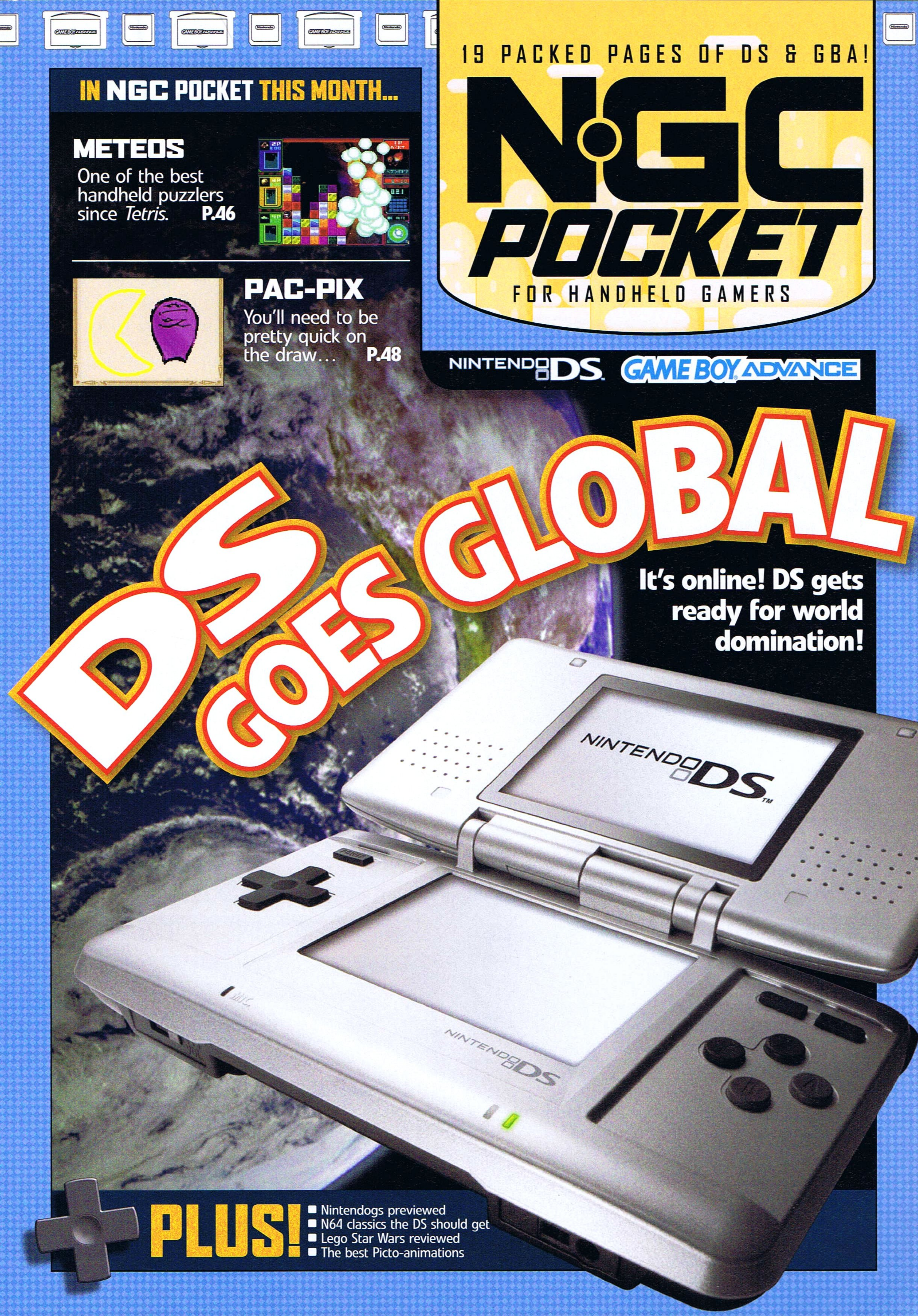
It's currently scheduled for release in September, and we'll have a closer look at it following the E3 show in May. We'll keep you informed.

TOOLBOX

If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing properly. Choose the right equipment...



With 60 varieties of enemy to defeat, it's important to choose the best weapon for the job. A ranged weapon such as the bow doesn't do much damage but has a high rate of fire, so you can stay away from tough opponents. When facing hordes of weaker foes, equip twin swords and start windmilling those arms, turning our Spartan hero into a human blender.


19 PACKED PAGES OF DS & GBA!
NGC POCKET
FOR HANDHELD GAMERS
IN NGC POCKET THIS MONTH...
METEOS
One of the best handheld puzzlers since Tetris. P.46
PAC-PIX
You'll need to be pretty quick on the draw... P.48
NINTENDO DS
GAME BOY ADVANCE
DS GOES GLOBAL
It's online! DS gets ready for world domination!
NINTENDO DS
PLUS!
Nintendogs previewed
N64 classics the DS should get
Lego Star Wars reviewed
The best Picto-animations

NGC POCKET

NEWS • NEWS • NEWS • NEWS

DS ONLINE AT LAST

Get ready to take on the world



We knew it was coming, but it's always nice to get solid confirmation from Nintendo themselves – and who better to deliver the announcement than Nintendo's president Satoru Iwata? Through his speech at this year's Game Developers Conference (you'll find more on this in the News at the front of the issue), Iwata gave away some tantalising details about Nintendo's planned online service. "Every aspect of DS is designed to be user friendly to all audiences. Therefore, WiFi should be easy to everyone too. Our goal is to make this process simple and seamless. Users shouldn't have to give it a thought… most importantly, we will remove the most important consumer barrier – Nintendo's WiFi connections will be free."

So who's responsible for all this then? Well, according to Nintendo, they've teamed up with the long-running gaming website, Gamespy. Although unfortunately they wouldn't tell us anything else, like how the service is actually going to work. Fortunately, we won't have long to wait, as Nintendo have promised that the DS will be online by the end of the year. To quote Iwata himself, "Is this infrastructure ready to go? Almost. What about development kits? By E3 you won't be asking that question. Well then, what about entertainment? I can say today that you will be playing WiFi games on DS this year."

This is, of course, wonderful news for all of us – and the fact that the service will be completely free is certainly a massive bonus. Even more reassuring is the fact that creating online content for DS games should be no more difficult than a standard wireless multiplayer game.

Unfortunately, in order for DS online to work from the comfort of your own home, you'll not only need a broadband connection, but also a wireless router or gateway. At the moment, people with broadband are in the minority – and people with a wireless network in their house are an even smaller minority. If you ask us, that's a much bigger consumer barrier than subscription fees, don't you think, Mr Iwata?

Still, you have to start somewhere. Nintendo will unveil more on their online service at this year's E3.



ANIMAL CROSSING

Animal Crossing to be first online DS game

Answering the prayers of gamers worldwide, *Animal Crossing* has been confirmed as being the first DS WiFi game. As Iwata explained, "Because of its unrestrained pace of action, it avoids wireless latency issues. Before you could take *Animal Crossing* to a different village. Now with WiFi you can take it around the world." Just imagine it – interacting with *Crossing* players around the globe, trading fruit, designing clothes and digging up other people's gardens. Of all the words in the English language, only 'spoo' can effectively sum up our excitement.

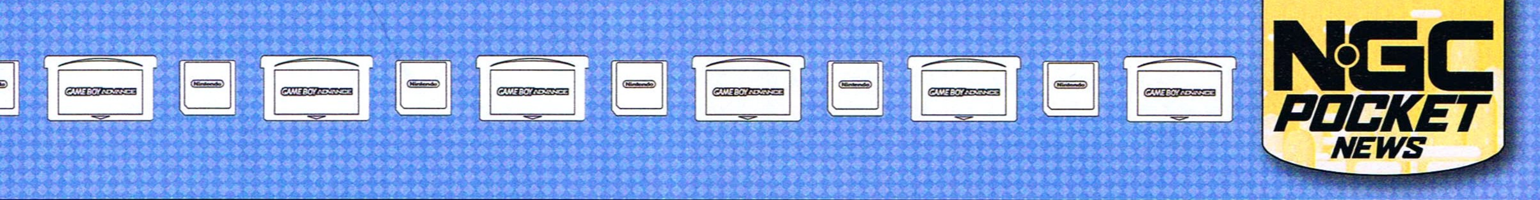


POKÉMON DIAMOND/PEARL



Go on, do it…

Surely Nintendo wouldn't be so stupid as to let this opportunity pass them by? Of all Nintendo's games, this is the one that would lend itself best to online play. Out with, 'Bug Catcher Mungo (and his crappy collection of Caterpies) wants to battle' and in with 'Trainer Kittsy wants to skin your Pikachu alive with his Scyther'. Or something. If Nintendo could work in voice recognition for Pokémon attacks and create a huge, vibrant gameworld for users to populate and explore, this would have the potential to really revive the franchise.





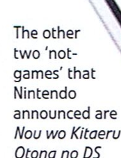
DS EUROPEAN LAUNCH

Britain gets touchy-feely fever

A resounding success for DS's European launch then. According to Nintendo's own figures the DS 'sold though' (ie sold) in excess of 87,000 units during its first weekend on sale in the UK, thereby surpassing Gamecube as the fastest-selling console in the entire history of Great Britain. Ever. Predictably *Mario 64 DS* and *Wario Ware* were the most popular launch games, closely followed by *Rayman DS*, proving that there really is no accounting for taste…

In total, Europeans bought just over 300,000 DS units in the first weekend – half of the original shipment of 650,000 units, which isn't bad going at all. That said, despite being the fastest selling console at the time, the Gamecube is hardly up there with PS2 in terms of its user base – so an impressive start, isn't always the best barometer with which to gauge future success. Still, with well over 3 million units sold worldwide, the DS has a pretty sizeable head start over the PSP, which has yet to get a release date here.

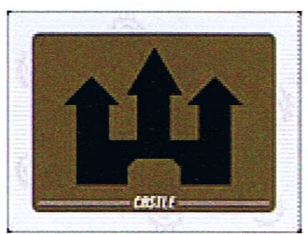
DS APPLICATIONS

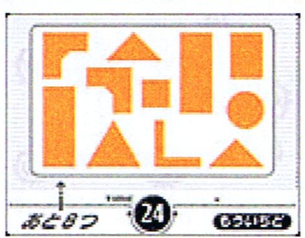


Teach your brain some Japanese learns!

We reported just a few months back that Nintendo had some kind of dictionary-come-translator language package planned. Turns out we were right, with the recent announcement of *DS Rakubiki Jiten* (or *DS: Simple Dictionary*). It's a package that uses a very similar interface to *PictoChat*, but allows you to search for Japanese Kanji and Roman characters as well as a chat function that lets you send messages that you want translating to users. There's no word on whether it will be released over here, but we certainly hope so, as it'll prove handy in Europe, what with the proliferation of different languages in our 'territory'.

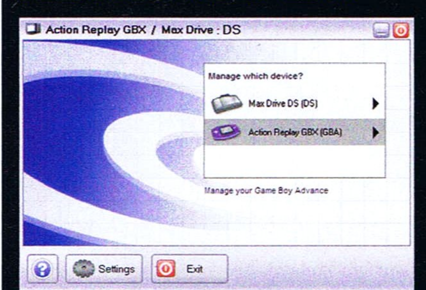
The other two 'not-games' that Nintendo announced are *Nou wo Kitaeru Otona no DS Training* and *Yawaraka Atama Juku* – both are similar in that they give the old grey matter a bit of a work out. *Kitaeru Otona* for example revolves around music and maths (hooray!) problems, while *Atama Juku* seems to have more traditional IQ test-style problems to work through, like logic, pattern recognition and spatial awareness. Bet you can't wait.











Yes, you can cheat. But there's more. Sort of…

It was bound to happen eventually. Called the *Action Replay Duo*, it enables you to cheat on all your favourite handheld games. Perhaps its most useful function is the ability to download and upload game saves to and from your PC. The device works through the GBA port on your DS and can connect to your PC via a USB cable. Apparently, the *Duo* will be available in a couple or weeks, so it may well be in the shops by the time you read this. We'll test it out (and rack up some unfeasibly high scores on *Meteos*, no doubt) pretty soon.



PLAY-YAN WESTBOUND

Nintendo's GBA and DS MP3 and video player has been confirmed for release in the US and Europe. According to Reggie Fils-Aime, the Play Yan is 'a real neat idea for this marketplace' – apparently there will be more on this at E3, where (hopefully) 'more' will be a confirmation of its release date.

KATAMARI DAMACY



Cult Japan-only PS2 title rolls onto DS!

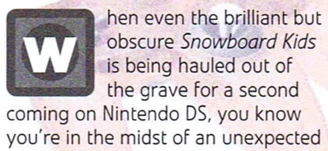
If this is some cruel April Fool, then we may have to kill someone. *Katamari Damacy* on PS2 has never been released outside of Japan, which is a shame, because it's one of the most original games of this generation. Basically it's all about a little green alien rolling a sticky ball around, picking up anything and everything in its path, from smaller objects to (eventually) whole islands and cities. The reason? So the king of space can make himself a new planet. Genius. Anyway, word is it's heading to DS, where stylus controlled rolling will be the order of the day, no doubt…



THE N64 TO DS WISH LIST



We loved them to bits back in the day and we reckon these ten games would be even better on the DS.



When even the brilliant but obscure *Snowboard Kids* is being hauled out of the grave for a second coming on Nintendo DS, you know you're in the midst of an unexpected Nintendo 64 revival.

For old timers like us, it only seems like yesterday that we were beheading ants in *Jet Force Gemini* and flushing the *Blast Corps* cartridge down the nearest toilet in frustration. But the mere thought of the DS making possible the resurrection of such classic titles has water pouring from our mouths *and* our eyes.

Join us now as we revisit ten N64 juicy fruits that are ripe for the plucking and dream about how the DS's twin screens, stylus and microphone could potentially prod, scribble and breathe new life into our dead, but not forgotten, friends.

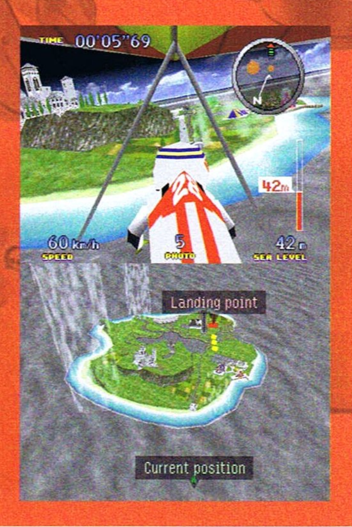
PILOTWINGS 64 (NINTENDO, N64/1: 89%)

WHAT WAS IT?
Handed you the gift of gyrocopters and bouncy shoes with one hand; with the other, it slapped you in the face with challenging missions such as jetpacking through the world's narrowest cave.

WHY RESURRECT IT?
OK, it was hard enough to cut glass (well, when you threw the joypad through a window in frustration). But having free rein of the skies was gloriously uplifting, and gold-medalling a mission made you feel like a god.

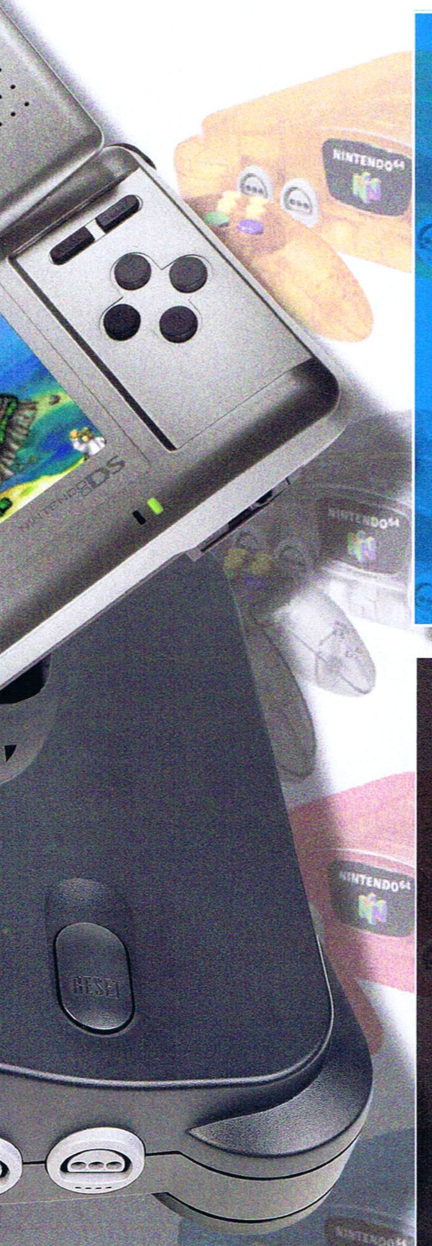
HOW?
The DS version could be like a more leisurely *Wario Ware Touched*, with a different stylus technique for each vehicle – rubbing the screen to tour the skies as Birdman, pulling back and letting go for the Cannonball target challenges, drawing an arcing path to guide Mr Bouncy Shoes around the island… And the DS' second screen was just made for a bird's-eye view of the ground below – *Pilotwings 64* was at its most teeth-gnashing when it came to flicking up-down-up-down to get the landing speed and the landing spot on.

AND ANOTHER THING…
Nintendo could offer new islands for download and hold competitions where the winners got a re-creation of their home towns.









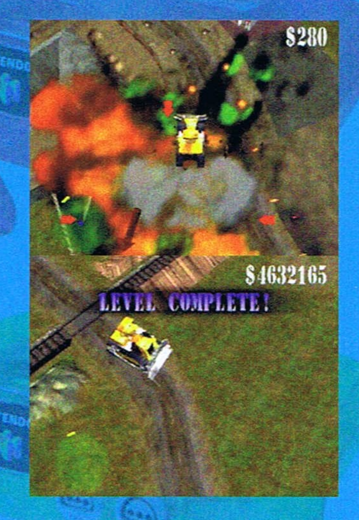
BLAST CORPS (NINTENDO, N64/5: 88%)

WHAT WAS IT?
A suffocatingly difficult but entirely successful experiment by Rare in dedicating a game to the subtle art of destroying everything in sight.

WHY RESURRECT IT?
Flattening the neighbourhood with bulldozers, bikes and big ol' bots – that's all there was to it. Could have got boring after a bit, except that scattered secrets and hyper-tight time limits kept you bashing away until there was nothing left.

HOW?
The DS' touchscreen is a bit too sensitive to let players knock buildings over by punching the plastic, but *Blast Corps* could be the perfect proving ground for the much-touted 'customisable controls' potential of the second display. Difficult vehicles would play nicely if you were given the ability to build and tweak your own control method on screen two. Perhaps it could work from templates where you got the choice of a steering wheel, sliders or one big button, then fiddled with the sensitivity and whatnot. An ambitious idea and a nightmare for coders to create and test, but we don't care.

AND ANOTHER THING...
Buildings could fall through to the second screen when you knock them down, building a satisfying pile of rubble.



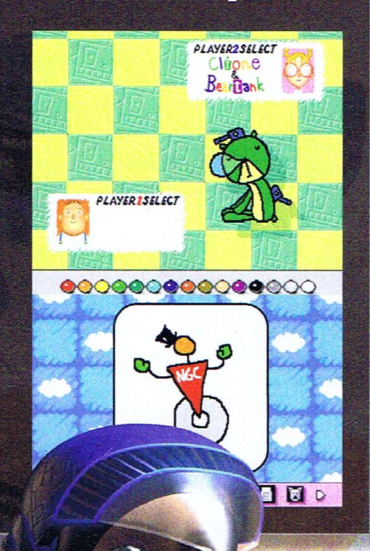
RAKUGA KIDS (KONAMI, N64/22: 80%)

WHAT WAS IT?
A mad-as-a-fish fighter in which 'street art' got the gift of life in order to knock seven bells out of each other (Rakuga is Japanese for graffiti).

WHY RESURRECT IT?
Although the move list is a minnow compared to the likes of *Soul Calibur*, it looked the business and anyway, you can't argue with characters that do battle by summoning moped-riding pizza delivery dogs.

HOW?
It doesn't take the mind of His Majesty King Miyamoto to imagine fighters *you* draw, *Pac-Pix*-style, on your DS screen. Animating a totally customizable, self-crayoned body might be pushing it, but scribbled heads or limbs springing to life seems possible. And why not use the stylus to tap where you want to target your attack or block your opponents' moves? Or to draw a 'tick' that first draws back your arm and then propels it forward? A list of moves up on the second screen would be a must, as well. We've lost so many fights from glancing at the instruction booklet...

AND ANOTHER THING...
Other DS beat-'em-ups could be transformed and made simpler with special moves executed by special stylus scribbles.



JET FORCE GEMINI (NINTENDO, N64/34: 93%)

WHAT WAS IT?
Two kids and a dog, up past their bedtime to gun down an army of alien ants. A spectacular on-foot shooter from Rare's unstoppable Nintendo 64 magic factory.

WHY RESURRECT IT?
Gigantic, gorgeous, gory and one of the few games to get non-vehicular blasting bang-on. Plus there are deviously clever insectoid enemies and the agonising requirement to keep your fire away from panicky, saucer-eyed cuddle-bears.

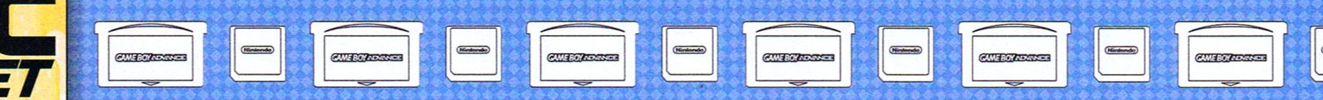
HOW?
We dream of Mizar's flying death squads weaving and diving across both the DS' screens, using the space for more enemies, prettier attack patterns and a tougher trip all round. Having said that, why not give robot helper Floyd (who was originally controlled by the N64 or a second joypad) his own view of the action on the bottom screen? In an emergency, you could prod him with your thumb to change his tactics.

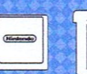
AND ANOTHER THING...
WiFi-enabled multiplayer would make our day and it should let people drop in and out of ongoing matches at any time.

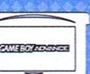








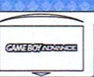


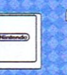














POKÉMON SNAP (NINTENDO, NGC/41: 80%)

WHAT WAS IT?
A photographic pokésafari from the *Smash Bros.* team in which four lively worlds of wild 'mon gurned it up for the camera.

WHY RESURRECT IT?
Short though it was for a £50 cart, smacking Pika with apples and filling your photo album with adorable Intellectual Properties Of Nintendo made for a uniquely relaxing and rewarding journey. Plus, strip off the cute skin and within whirred the robotic heart of a true shoot-'em-up.

HOW?
We're slightly obsessed with the thought of a satisfying stylus sweep to wind your film on ready for another shot before Poliwhirl dives for cover. But wifi's the real opportunity for a DS conversion of this game. Imagine a 'live' island where Mr Mime only shows his grotesque face when another snapper who's already caught him hops onto your bus. Or perhaps Wooper bouncing into view only when you're, say, on the coast or at Stonehenge – thanks to some kind of in-built global positioning system.

AND ANOTHER THING…
Like many a game, *Snap* would benefit mightily from an official, online high score table. And with the DS' online capability, it could be updated in an instant.



SPACESTATION SILICON VALLEY (TAKE-TWO, NGC/22: 91%)

WHAT WAS IT?
A funny and utterly surreal mission from the *Grand Theft Auto* team. The aim was to crush a space station full of robot animals by possessing their bodies.

WHY RESURRECT IT?
It was utterly unique and barking mad. All that grass and sheep in space gave *Silicon Valley* an unrivalled other-worldly atmosphere. And test-driving each new animal was a treat.

HOW?
We can't scrub out of our brains the idea of making animal noises into the DS' microphone – 'woof!', 'moo!', that sort of thing – to pull off each beast's special move. But above all, *Silicon Valley* is sitting up and begging to be transformed into something massively multiplayer via the DS' online ability. Imagine an entire planet of players forming gangs of sheep on springs, petrol-powered dogs and hyenas on bikes for a gargantuan and never-ending battle of the beasts, while newbies level up with missions to kill King Rats and punch dinosaurs in the face.



AND ANOTHER THING…
We've yet to see a game that uses the second screen as a 'rear-view mirror' for spotting sneaky attacks from behind. This could be it..



GLOVER (NINTENDO, NGC/21: 83%)

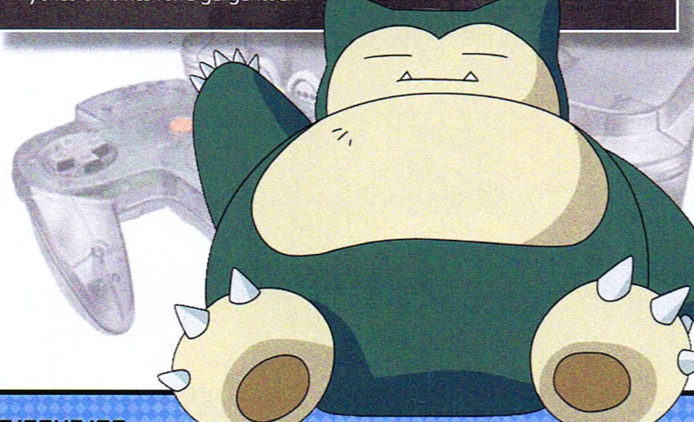
WHAT WAS IT?
Platformer. You're a hand, but you're *really* controlling a ball to batter cuddly enemies and get to the exit. Oh, you ride on the ball too. And sometimes it turns into a green crystal. Er…

WHY RESURRECT IT?
It had its failings, but amidst a sea of derivative Mario wannabes, *Glover* was a clever idea. It was pretty as a picture, nicely designed and tough as a big rock. Great music, too.

HOW?
With the DS, *Glover*'s hour has come. Wave goodbye to the mind-destroying controls you had to use on the N64 version – on the DS, your brain and fingers finally cooperate. You could pat the screen to dribble the ball basketball-style, draw an arcing curve to bung it across the level or draw a little circle to flip and stand on top.



AND ANOTHER THING…
We've got a neat idea for uncovering secret areas in DS platformers: rubbing away at walls like a lottery scratchcard to reveal hidden caves and suchlike. And that 'drawing a path for the ball' trick could make for an interesting new way to play videogame tennis.





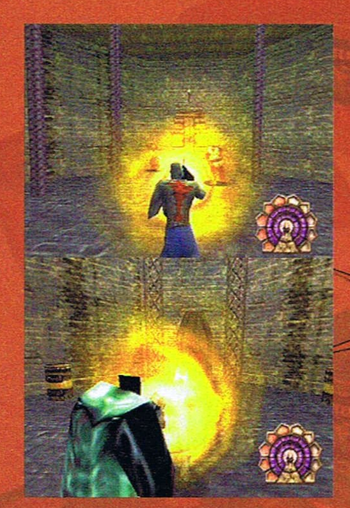
SHADOW MAN (ACCLAIM, N64/32: 93%)

WHAT WAS IT?
Distressingly dark tale of comic-book zombie bloke Mike LeRoi and his mission to give five serial murderers a taste of their own medicine.

WHY RESURRECT IT?
Looks and plays a little like *Zelda* in hell but *Shadow Man's* sprawling world of apocalyptic platforming and combat was whipped along by a gripping and thoroughly nasty storyline. If you explored the twisted children's playrooms, you're probably *still* wetting the bed.

HOW?
We already know the DS is great for quirky laugh-'em-ups, but *Shadow Man* would demonstrate how the system's features can be mixed up with narrative for tip-top scares. What about downloading new sections without the player's knowledge, so new scare-filled rooms open up from nowhere? Or making the game so 'wifi-aware' that another player can see the action from your screen, and drag objects around to worry you up, *Eternal Darkness*-style? Or have the developers beam out weird messages 'live' to create a kind of viral marketing scheme gone nuts?

AND ANOTHER THING...
Shadow Man and similar games could use the second screen to show the game's plot using comic-book visuals.





TETRISPHERE (NINTENDO, NGC/13: 69%)

WHAT WAS IT?
Mind-breaking spherical take on the classic *Tetris*, only in this version you have to drag three-dimensional blocks around the screen and slot them into a great big spinning globe of brain pain.

WHY RESURRECT IT?
In truth, N64 *Tetrisphere* was just too hard on the old noggin to light up the charts at the time. But like many a confusing concept, the immediacy of DS' controls make it worth another go.

HOW?
The loo roll-spingging Clog It game in *Wario Ware Touched* is an immensely and embarrassingly satisfying experience. If you used the same dragging technique to spin *Tetrisphere's* rotund jigsaw of blocks and the stylus to drag shapes about, your brain would be much happier. And how about a version of this – or *Tetris* itself – where you use the touch screen and stylus to draw the blocks you're after?

AND ANOTHER THING...
We're waiting for a puzzle game – *Tetrisphere, Bust-A-Move, Puyo Puyo,* could be any of them – to incorporate a two-player mode that allows you to 'bat' back blocks your enemy tries to dump on you, swiping the stylus to magic up a trampolining protect-o-barrier.



GOLDENEYE 007 (NINTENDO, N64/9: 94%)

WHAT WAS IT?
Rare's magnum opus tore apart the rule book for both movie tie-ins and first-person shooters, shot two bullets in it and then muttered a corny one-liner while straightening its bow tie.

WHY RESURRECT IT?
Not content with bringing intelligent enemies, gripping stealth, sniper rifles and other aspects of reality that put you squarely in the shoes of Bond, Rare bolted on a four-player deathmatch that knocked sliced bread down to number two.

HOW?
We're peeing our pants already at the thought of flawless online gun battles in the never-bettered Facility arena against 'l33t d00ds' living in places we never knew existed. But even in single player mode, the potential for second-screen action is enormous: sniper sights, security cams, a view through the eyes of CPU-controlled aides like Natalya, seeing the results of grenades chucked around corners... Or – to borrow an idea from *Rogue Agent* and make it good – show what the guards are seeing, adding an extra layer of sweat to the stealth.

AND ANOTHER THING...
Both knife-based and fists-only combat could be livened up by using targeted stylus sweeps to control the moves...



DID WE MISS ANYTHING?

Have you got a favourite N64 game you'd like to see on DS? Or have you had a genius idea for an as-yet-unexploited DS possibility? We'll print the best ideas.

Write to us at N64 to DS Wishlist, **NGC Magazine**, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW or email us at ngc@futurenet.co.uk.



ELECTROPLANKTON

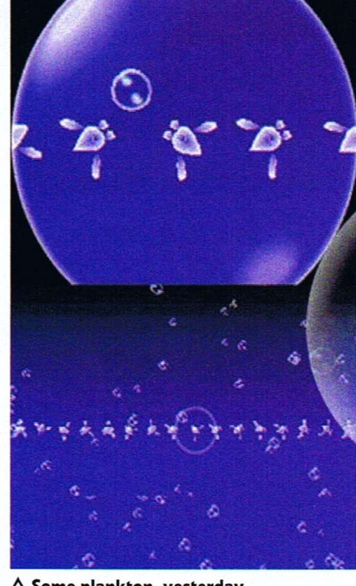
From: NINTENDO

This kind of thing is right up our street. Created by the artist Toshio Iwai, renowned for his work with interactive light and sound, it's more of a musical toy than a real game.

You're presented with a series of 'plankton', wee beasties that have their own properties and means of translating sound and movement into music and rhythms, but which also give a visual representation of the sound and music you make.

You interact with the plankton and their environment by using the touch screen, and even the most subtle actions can have an effect on the sounds and visuals produced. You can add your own samples by speaking into the mic or even tapping the DS unit itself. If it all sounds a little strange, well, that's because it *is* strange – and unlike anything we've seen before.

Words can't really do this little oddity justice; if you want to have a look at the sort of stuff you can expect, have a butchers at www.electroplankton.com. There, you'll find videos of *Electroplankton* in action, as well as some really interesting clips of people playing with the various kinds of plankton. We'll have a full review next month.



△ Some plankton, yesterday…



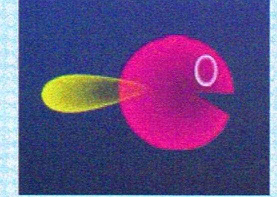
△ These little Rec-Rec fish will record your voice and, if you tap the DS, it will record your beats before playing them back in a most amusing way.

WHO'S WHO

You've got ten types of little swimmers. Here's a quick run-down of what each one's called and what they'll do for you.



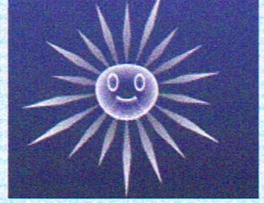
01 TRACY
When you draw a shape with your stylus this plankton will follow the trail, producing sounds in the process.



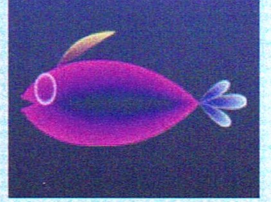
02 HANENBOW
These little fellas jump out of the water and bounce on the leaves. Try changing the angle of leaves for different sounds and rhythms.



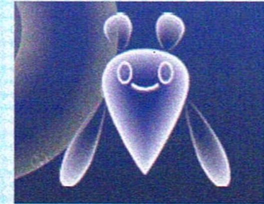
03 LUMINARIA
Touch the arrows to change the direction this plankton travels, and the rhythms and patterns it makes.



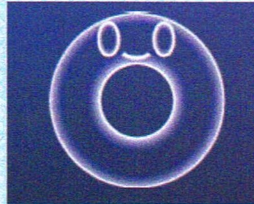
04 SUN-ANIMALCULE
Touch the screen to lay eggs with your stylus – they'll grow, producing lights and sounds as they go.



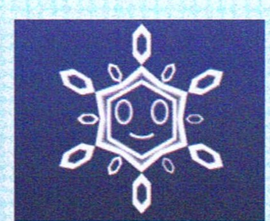
05 REC-REC
Touch them and they change colour, then talk into the mic and tap rhythms while they're blinking to record your own beats.



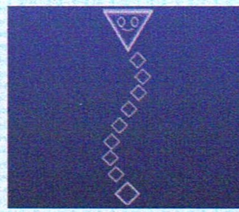
06 NANOCARP
Clap your hands near to the mic and these happy chappies will cluster together and form shapes. They'll also react to your voice.



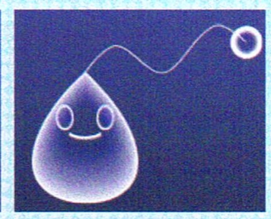
07 LUMILOOP
You can draw circles over them with your stylus. The speed you draw makes lights and sounds that expand outwards in different ways.



08 MARINE-SNOW
Try stirring and moving them around with your stylus for different musical effects.



09 BEATNES
If you tap segments of their head or body with your stylus, they'll memorise your performance actions to create different beats.



10 VOLVOICE
This one's basically a versatile voice recorder. Touch the plankton, then speak into the mic and Volvoice will play back your voice in various



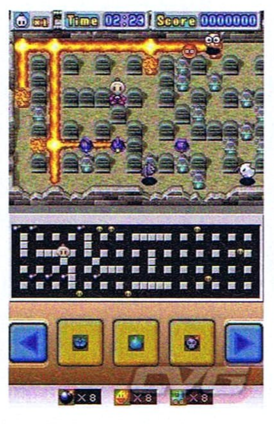
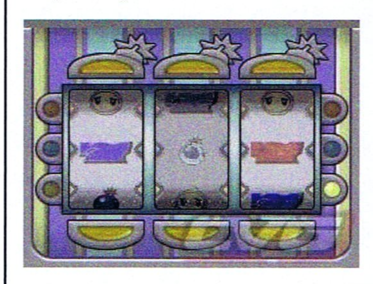

BOMBERMAN DS

From: HUDSON

This is an old multiplayer favourite that lost its way in recent years – especially after the atrocious N64 efforts – so it's good to see it returning to its purer, more simplistic roots.

Control is mainly done using the D-Pad and buttons, but Hudson uses the DS's dual screens in a number of ways. First, the second screen can give a 3D view of the top-down action taking place on the top screen; second, the two screens are used to show off an extended playing field, with players darting back and forth between top and bottom screens. The bottom screen can also double up as a map screen to show the extended playing field as well as playing host to a number of little mini-games.

Best of all is the eight-player multiplayer – a glorious bomb-laying extravaganza the like of which we've not seen since the Sega Saturn. Sure, there's nothing particularly new in there from what we can see, but there's just something deep inside us that's *really* looking forward to it. Here's hoping it's got a single-cart link…

NINTENDOGS

From: NINTENDO

Before we run the review next month, here's a final look at the cutest thing ever to grace a console. It's basically one big puppy love-in. You play with your pups, train them and enter them into agility competitions – like a miniature Crufts.

The doggies will react to you touching them with the stylus, to your voice (a feature we've yet to try in this game) and the more you play with them, the better 'skills' they'll learn for the competitions.

More interesting, though, is the fact that the game will come in three different packages, each with its own starting set of five breeds. From what we can tell, each game will have all the breeds available to unlock, the only difference between the games is the dogs you start off with.

As yet, we have no idea if you can trade dogs between handhelds, but we'd be surprised if there wasn't some kind of wireless connectivity feature. Hopefully, you'll be able to challenge your mates' pups in the competitions, too.



NANOSTRAY

From: SHINEN

Remember *Iridion* on the GBA? No? Good, because despite being technically impressive, it was actually a bit rubbish. *Iridion 2*, on the other hand, proved to be a very solid and entertaining little shooter – which is perhaps the main reason we're interested in *Nanostray*, the only shooter of its kind we've seen for the DS.

It comes from German developers Shinen and is basically a 2D, top-down shooter with some lavish 3D backgrounds. Surprisingly, Shinen haven't used the dual screen to give a lengthier view of the action. They've settled for having the top screen showing the action and the bottom one showing the ship's systems, weapons and so forth.

We can't predict whether or not this will make the action a little cramped, but judging from some of the footage we've seen, it may well be the case.

Still, it's a beautiful looking game, especially in motion, and we can't help but get a little excited.







OBJECTION

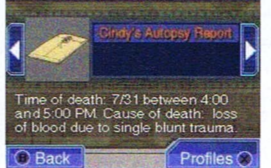
From: CAPCOM

Another curiosity for you. *Objection* is essentially an interactive courtroom drama, the kind of game that's rather popular in Japan but never gets released in the West. All that's about to change though, as Capcom are in the process of translating the game for a US release.

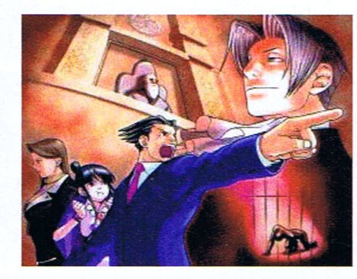
You play the part of Phoenix Wright, a lawyer whose task it is to find the truth in five separate cases. You talk to witnesses and can cross-reference what they say against other testimonies and other pieces of evidence in your possession.

By doing this you have to work out who's innocent, who's telling porkie-pies and who should be banged up till the end of time. Of course, the tougher the case, the harder it is to work this out.

It sounds like a very appealing idea, so let's hope it won't be as abhorrent to play as Ubisoft's quite dreadful dating game, *Sprung*, which had a similar conversation and menu interface. Still, thousands of Japanese fans can't be wrong…











△ Nobody can be told what the *Meteos* is. You must play it with your own hands.

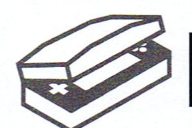


△ One of the marginally less bizarre block themes.



△ Link the three grey blocks to launch that platform right into orbit.

METEOS



FROM: BANDAI
MICROPHONE: NO
PLAYERS: 1-4
OUT: NOW (JAP)
SINGLE CART LINK: YES
COST: ¥5040 (£25)

The most satisfying puzzle game ever?



Here's a game to test whether your DS really can last for ten straight hours without a recharge.

Meteos is the most compellingly perfect puzzler we've played in years. It blends the tactical simplicity of *Puyo Pop* with the high-adrenaline kick of a decent shoot-'em-up.

"BLENDS TACTICAL SIMPLICITY AND A HIGH-ADRENALINE KICK"

The concept is simple, but brilliant: clear away falling, coloured blocks by launching them into space. Connecting three of the same colour creates a rocket-powered platform that lifts off, carrying with it all the blocks directly above it.

Clearly, you want to build the platform as low down as possible in your pile of blocks, so it removes more clutter from the screen. But if you try to launch too many blocks the rockets won't be able to clear the planet's gravity field, making it barely halfway up the screen before beginning to get dragged back down to earth.

That's when you have to start creating further reactions within the hovering platforms by rearranging the blocks they contain or flinging more blocks into them from the pile of spares below.

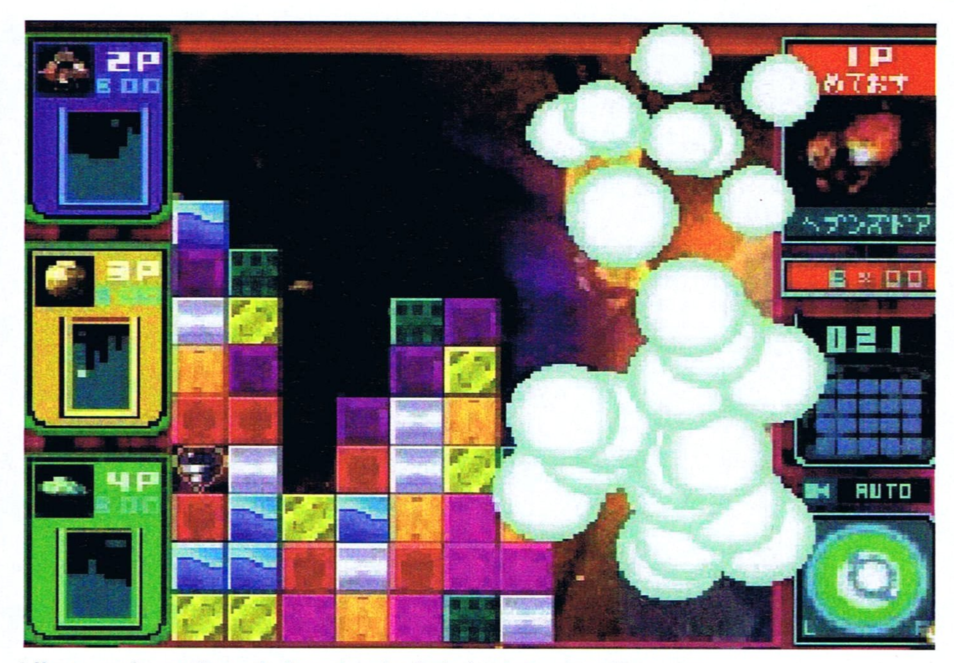
You can also set up chain reactions by arranging everything so the blocks return to the ground and settle into an instant group of three. This gives the biggest possible rocket boost but runs the risk of accumulating a lot of heavy debris from above, as you have to wait a few seconds until the platform touches down.

Too much debris and you'll need to spark off even more explosions to get the thing moving. If your launch fails, the blocks eventually lose their 'platformness' and turn back into random clutter.





△ Launch the lower platform with three greens.



△ You can see how well your rivals are doing by displaying their screens above yours.



△ See how this one can be launched? Easy.



△ Special items destroy loads of blocks.



△ In the Star Trip mode, playing against two aliens.

Multiplayer games get wickedly competitive, with everyone desperately trying to launch huge platforms in the face of a deluge of junk blocks from the other players.

The solo modes consist of time trials, endurance tests or battles against virtual players, with new game types as rewards for progress.

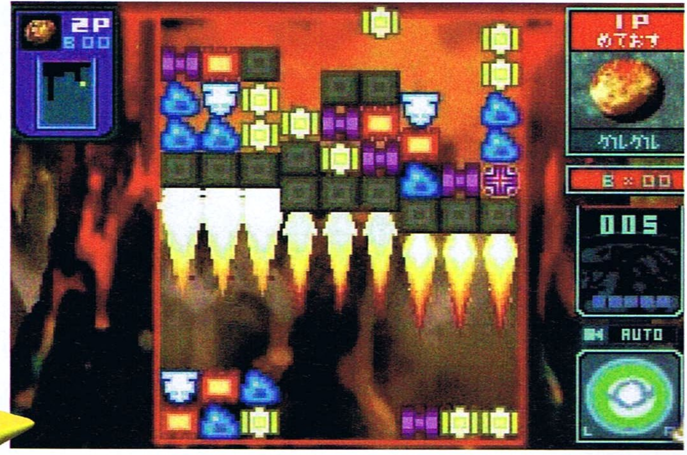
There are countless variations, each with subtle differences in gravity, block behaviour and the explosiveness of each type of combo. Depending on the rules you're playing with, connecting three blocks might launch the platform just a few pixels into the air, or completely vapourise it in an instant.

You can only play the default set of rules in the single-cart link-up mode though, so each player will need their own copy of the game to experience it fully.

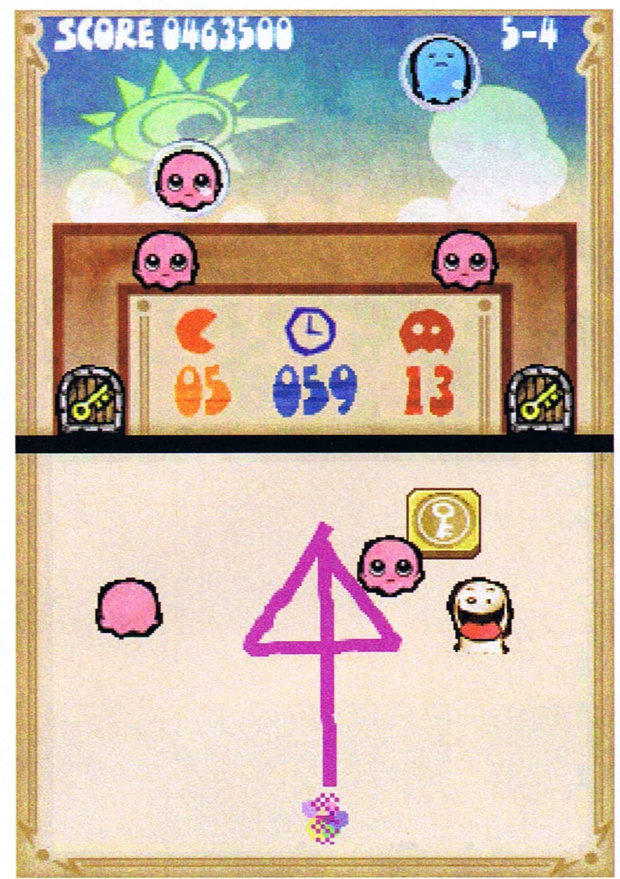
Not that there's a single valid reason for any DS owner not to own this one. When you find yourself dreaming restlessly of rocket-powered blocks after a midnight Meteos marathon, yet still try to squeeze in a couple more goes on the bus in the morning, you'll know you've found a game with that rare spark of magic. Don't forget to keep your battery charger handy.

MARTIN KITTS

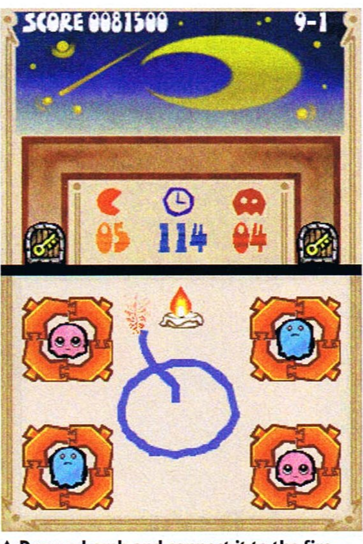




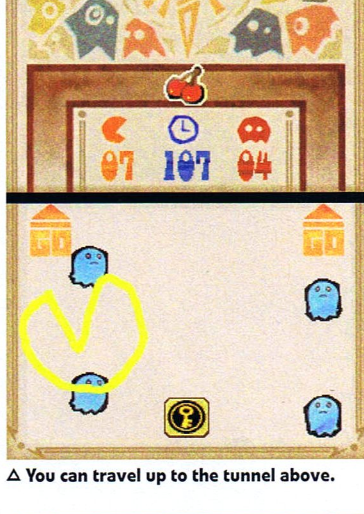
△ You can create chain reactions when the platforms come to rest.



△ Arrows can be drawn to shoot the ghosts out of their bubbles above...



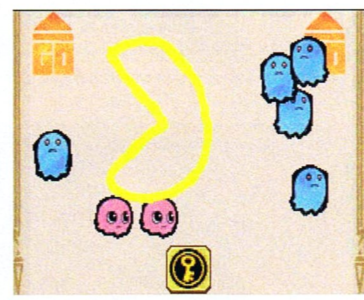
△ Draw a bomb and connect it to the fire.



△ You can travel up to the tunnel above.



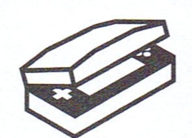
△ Look out for walls that block your arrows.



△ Bigger Pac-Men travel much slower.

△ Draw a huge Pac-Man for this boss.

PAC-PIX



FROM: NAMCO
MICROPHONE: NO
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW (JAPAN)
SINGLE CART LINK: NO
COST: ¥5020 (£25)

Who says doodling is a waste of time?



Draw Pac-Man – the sharp angle of the mouth, then his round body – and he'll animate and move off in the direction you drew him facing. Guide him towards the roaming ghosts by drawing walls in front of him: the direction you draw the wall is the direction in which he travels.

That's the simple premise behind this game, and it captivated the crowds when the DS was first playable at last year's E3. But there's more to *Pac-Pix* than that.

It's much cleverer than we originally thought. Although stages are essentially a collection of ghost hunts (catch them all to progress to the next stage) many factors complicate that process.

To begin with, there's a time limit, and it gets fairly strict in the latter stages. So you need to create multiple Pac-Men to make your ghost-catching more efficient. You also have to think about the size of your Pac-Man. Bigger ones have a larger catchment area but move more slowly, so you need a team of screen-filling and speedy Pac-People, working together.

And there's more. The top screen has a little pathway that loops back onto the bottom screen. This area is normally locked, and Pac-Man must hit a switch to get access to the ghosts that are hiding up there.

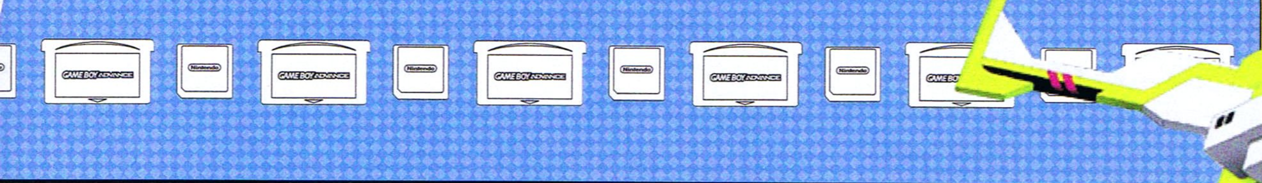
The top screen also has a number of ghosts floating in unreachable bubbles. These must be burst with arrows, which you draw. They fire off in the direction you draw them and can also be used to shoot at bosses. You must also draw bombs to break open ghost-trapping blocks. This all creates a number of dynamics that have to be used together if you're going to succeed. That's quite a lot to think about, and part of the challenge is keeping track of everything that's going on.

The fact that failure on any stage means replaying an entire level again can be extremely frustrating, especially when you're learning how best to approach a situation. But the sheer originality and inventiveness of it all inevitably wins through, making this one of the most memorable games you'll ever play.

> **"ONE OF THE MOST MEMORABLE GAMES YOU'LL EVER PLAY"**

GERAINT EVANS

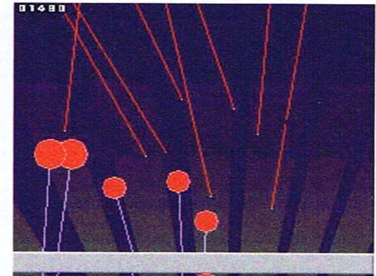


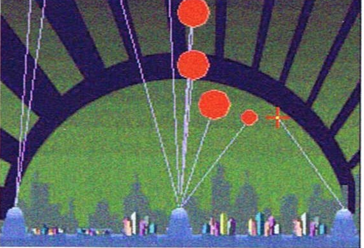






Under Saddam, people died for this kind of blasphemy.





Hold L to draw blind on the upper screen.





It's actually quite offensive.

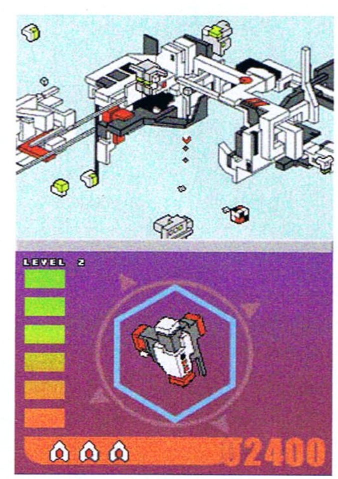


Nope, no idea why this happened.

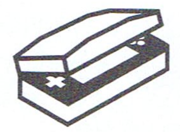


Graffiti remixes. Brilliant.

ATARI RETRO CLASSICS



Looks fun, but it isn't. Not at all.



FROM: ATARI **MICROPHONE:** NO **PLAYERS:** 1-4 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30

Nostalgia ain't what it used to be.

Ten coin-op classics from the early '80s on one DS cart, plus versions designed by 'famous' graffiti artists. Where do we sign up?

But – oh dear. This sorry excuse for a compilation left us crying salty tears of disappointment. Were these games gigantic piles of crap back in the old days, too? Or are they just victims of one of the poorest, most insensitive conversions we've ever seen?

Take *Asteroids*, once a gracefully balletic, zero-gravity shoot-'em-up. It's reduced to a clumsy, barely playable mess of pixels, with a fiddly touch-screen control system that is, to put it mildly, shite.

Or *Missile Command*, a Cold War masterpiece that would have been set in California and entitled *Armageddon* were it not for Atari's fear of scaremongering. On the DS, the tension of shooting down incoming nukes is negated by dire controls. You tap the screen at the point where you want to fire a missile, holding L or R to flip the cursor to the upper screen, at which point you're firing blind.

Of the ten games on offer, only *Centipede* and *Tempest* are worth playing more than once, and even they're hardly the greatest versions ever seen, with poor handling, dodgy collision detection and minimal difficulty level. Many of the other games, particularly *Pong*, *Breakout* and *Sprint*, are simply appalling.

There's no improvement from the graffiti 'remixes'. They're exactly the same as the standard games, with minor visual changes such as redrawn spaceships and alternative text fonts. In the case of *Pong*, the white bat and ball have been redrawn in yellow but with the same sound effects, same rubbish gameplay, same everything else. The word that springs to mind is 'amateur'.

By way of a final insult, the games that support multiple players require each participant to own a copy of this cartridge. Which basically means you'll never be able to see if the game magically becomes any good against a human opponent, because the chances of meeting another person who bought this dismal effort must be incredibly slim.

> "THE WORD THAT SPRINGS TO MIND IS 'AMATEUR'"

MARTIN KITTS









△ Combat against the endlessly respawning, and highly irritating enemies is a very clumsy, lock-on and pummel affair. Needless to say, it's utterly tedious.



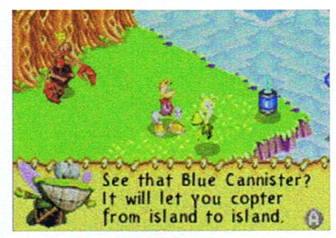
△ Oooh! Rayman can climb up vines! Can you hear the world rejoicing?



△ Previously capable of swimming, Rayman now takes water damage.



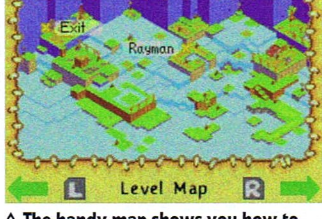
△ At the game's exit you'll be given a breakdown of your score.



△ Your 'copter hair isn't good enough to travel between islands.



△ Ah yes. The old helicopter hair. Someone, please shoot us now.



△ The handy map shows you how to get the hell out of these painful levels.

RAYMAN
HOODLUM'S REVENGE

FROM: UBISOFT	**PLAYERS:** 1	**SINGLE CART LINK:** NO
SAVE: ON CART	**OUT:** NOW	**COST:** £30

We tried to like it. We really, honestly tried. But look what we're up against…

Rayman hasn't got many friends here at **NGC** – even fewer after the utterly shoddy DS game (NGC105/2]. We are, though, willing to admit that his original GBA outing was pretty good.

It was a solid platformer; unemarkable maybe, but as tightly designed and attractive 2D jump-and-collect action goes, it wasn't too bad at all. If *Hoodlum's Revenge* had been an extension of that, well, we wouldn't have been exactly over the moon, but we wouldn't have been quite as offended by it as we are with how it actually turned out.

The biggest problem here is the game's move to an isometric viewpoint. Now, we're always in favour of games trying something different, but the way it's done in *Hoodlum* is woeful.

Frustration sets in after just a couple of levels. Each stage is basically an open space for you to navigate; you have to guide the bloke with no limbs (is it because someone found him so irritating they hacked his arms and legs off?) to the exit of a level after hitting the required switches to open locked gates barring his path.

Along the way, there's a set number of shiny little orbs to collect and four captive creatures to rescue. Collect them all and you get a special stamp at the level's end.

There's a combo system at play now. Once you collect an item, you have a limited amount of time in which to collect another item, and then another (and so on) for much higher scores.

Running through a level collecting item after item in quick succession will therefore lead to higher scores, which are rewarded by another stamp at the level's end. This means there's plenty of scope for replay (read: memorisation) of each level, and while such a feature is commendable - the question remains. Will you want to have another go?

Probably not. The isometric view makes even the simplest of tasks extremely annoying. Judging jumps is painfully tricky at times. Platforms that look perfectly reachable turn out not to be; collecting items suspended in the air is exceptionally hard to judge and combat is, frankly, a complete mess.

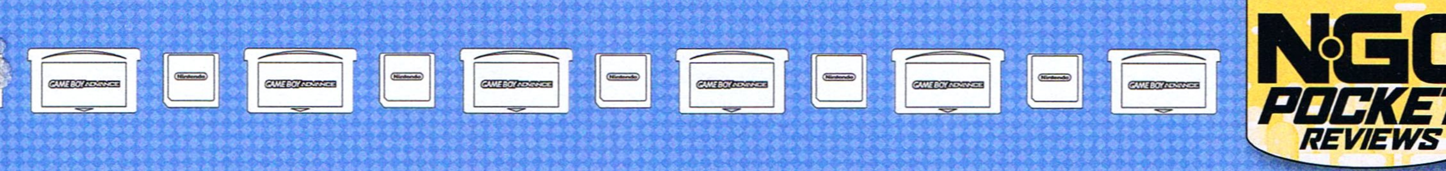
> **"FRUSTRATION SETS IN AFTER JUST A COUPLE OF LEVELS"**

All this, combined with the fact that Rayman has mysteriously forgotten how to swim (water actually deals masses of damage) means repeated deaths through no fault of your own are an alarming regularity. So, er, in case you hadn't guessed by now, we find *Hoodlum's Revenge* very difficult to recommend.

GERAINT EVANS

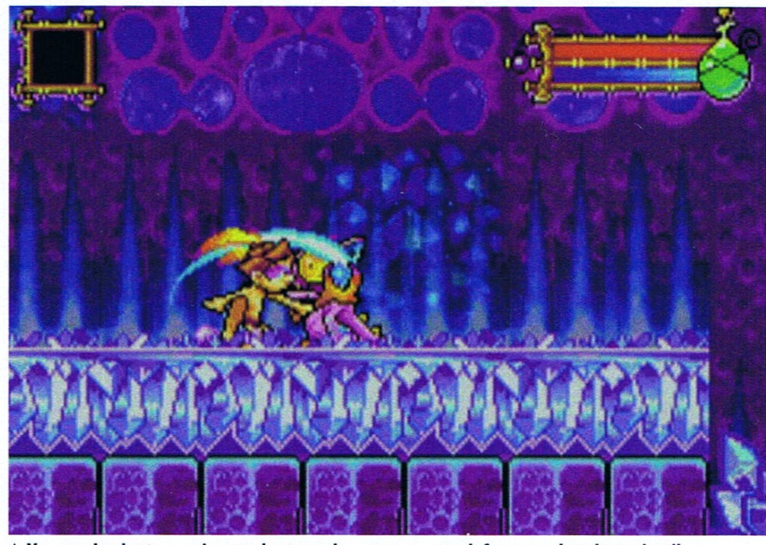
2



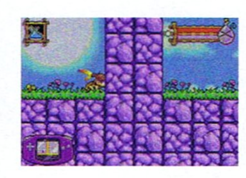




△ Read the tutorial or you'll wonder what the hell is going on. Like us.


△ You can hack at enemies up close, or charge your attack for some handy projectiles.


△ Enter the dream world for a short period of time and you'll spot platforms you couldn't see before. And your reward? Shiny orbs!



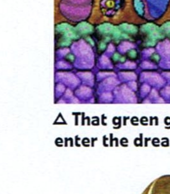




TAK 2: STAFF OF DREAMS



FROM: THQ **SAVE:** ON CART **PLAYERS:** 1 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30


△ That green goo is your power to enter the dream world.

Get a firm grip on your staff and see what kind of interesting dreams you have…



Like its Gamecube namesake, this is hardly cutting-edge stuff. But that's not to say it's awful.

It's a simple, 2D platformer where you guide Tak from point A to point B, hacking down enemies that get in the way. Meanwhile, you have to negotiate increasingly difficult arrangements of platforms.

"HARDLY CUTTING-EDGE STUFF, BUT IT'S PUT TOGETHER WELL"

So, concept-wise, it's nothing you haven't come across before. That said, it's all been put together well.

Tak has a number of skills at his disposal, such as a teleporting ability that lets him get behind seemingly impassable walls. Perhaps most interestingly, he can look into the 'dreamworld' – another dimension running parallel to the normal world. Tapping the right trigger puts Tak into the dreamworld for a brief time, letting him see platforms he wouldn't otherwise be able to negotiate.

As ever, commanding the normal world's wildlife is also key to your progress, letting you cross expanses of water on the back of turtles, fly using birds, fight strong water currents on the back of a bear and jump to higher areas off the back of springy sheep.

There's a fair amount of puzzling and head-scratching required to get to the end of each stage and, for the most part, it all works competently enough. Visually it's all crystal clear and the controls are tight and intuitive enough, once you've familiarised yourself with Tak's full repertoire of moves. The overall design and artwork won't blow your mind, but it's charming enough.

The trouble is, while *Tak 2* never really does anything really wrong, it struggled to hold our interest for longer than a couple of hours – mainly because we've seen this kind of thing done better countless times on the GBA. Take your pick of any of Nintendo's own offerings (and even Rayman's side-scrolling adventures) and you'll find prettier, more engaging experiences.

That means this will only appeal to hardened *Tak* devotees and, as far as we know, such people don't exist…

GERAINT EVANS

3



Battle the evil within!

12+

www.pegi.info

At a time when Earth and Ocean are merely fairytale and the world now exists as floating islands in the sky, two young heroes discover their fates are intertwined as they battle to save their home world. Take control of your party of winged warriors as you journey across the beautiful, expansive environment, battling huge creatures with a fast-paced and innovative combat system.

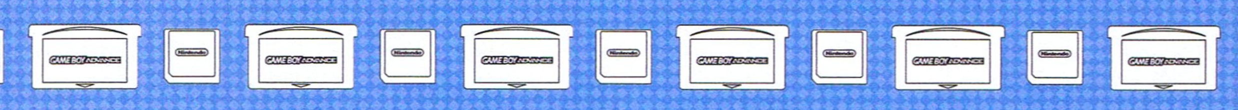
BATEN KAITOS™ Eternal Wings And The Lost Ocean

Only for Nintendo GameCube OUT 1ST APRIL







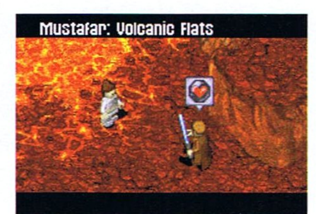




△ Every level draws from a scene in the three prequel films.


△ There are force powers available to you on the L and R buttons.





△ Don't just control Jedi. You can be other characters like Padme.


△ Darth Maul can also be unlocked.


△ Free play enables you to re-enter levels with other characters for a high score.

LEGO STAR WARS



FROM: EIDOS	**PLAYERS:** 1	**SINGLE CART LINK:** NO
SAVE: ON CART	**OUT:** NOW	**COST:** £25

A fusion of our two favourite boyhood pastimes...


Now here's something you don't see every day. It's a Star Wars game that's genuinely worth your time. Ordinarily we would have expected this to display a minimum amount of effort on the part of the developer, followed by inevitable disappointment and a right-royal slating on our part. Yet *Lego Star Wars* bucks the trend by actually being pretty decent.

The game follows the events of the three prequel movies, and each episode is distilled into short, little isometric hack 'n' slash platforming adventures. Now there's nothing revolutionary about that (in fact, it's fairly reminiscent of the Dreamcast's *Jedi Power Battles*), but what is refreshing is the obvious amount of love and effort that's gone into it. For an isometric game, there's little in the way of frustration (*Rayman*, take note). Given the perspective, it doesn't make any unreasonable platforming demands and combat, although rudimentary, has enough options, through blocking and force-powers, to prove relatively satisfying.

> "SO MUCH LOVE AND EFFORT HAS GONE INTO MAKING IT..."

So even at its most basic level, *Lego Star Wars* is a whole load of fun, but it gets better. There are a boatload of presentational aspects here that we absolutely adore. The sound effects are perfect, and from the lightsabre noises, to the howls of the Tusken Raiders and blorking voices of the trade-federation droids, everything is spot on.

We particularly like the conscious simplicity with which each tale is told, with a series of little icons depicting conversations between characters and cut-stills punctuated with little grunts. It's all very endearing and helps to gel the package into a highly amusing little journey. Well worth investigating.

GERAINT EVANS

4


△ You can buy extra health and force stock from NPCs you meet.


△ The sound effects are spot on.

DUEL MASTERS KAIJODU SHOWDOWN



FROM: ATARI **SAVE:** ON CART **PLAYERS:** 1-4 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30



Between *Yu-Gi-Oh*, *Pokémon* and *Magic the Gathering* you'd think there were enough card games around to eat up all your pocket money – but evidently not. *Duel Masters*, the latest entry into the seedy world of deck-building has yet to build up the kind of following its fellow card games have enjoyed. But that's not to say it isn't interesting.



For a start, *Duel Masters* is the work of Wizards of the Coast, a company well versed in making good card games. They made all of the big three and it shows.

The basic rules are pretty easy to learn, but the more you play, the more you peel back layer upon layer of depth and strategy. Not just in how you play, but how you construct your deck to cover your backside against particular eventualities or to set up specific attacks.

This deck-building is the primary task in *Duel Masters*, and you're constantly upgrading your best deck with new cards you get through dualling or trading with NPCs.

There's a very good strategy game hidden away in here, with plenty of card attributes to consider, weigh up and balance. But we're not sure who, other than fans of real-world card games, would want to spend the time discovering it.

GERAINT EVANS

3





△ You need card experience to excel.



△ Construct your deck before a duel.



△ You can win fights to upgrade cards.



△ Or you can trade cards with NPCs

△ "No! I said 'Twiglet' – not 'Piglet'. How will we ever get him out now?"

△ Oh yeah. This is proper cutting edge stuff, it really is.

WINNIE THE POOH RUMBLY TUMBLY ADVENTURE



FROM: UBI-SOFT **SAVE:** ON CART **PLAYERS:** 1 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30



Oh dear – poor old Pooh's got a 'rumbly' in his tummy. What can he possibly do to make it go away? Remember all his friends' birthday parties, that's what! Fan-bloody-tastic.

Much like the Gamecube version (reviewed this issue), it's hard to be down on *Rumbly Tumbly Adventure*. No, it's not the kind of thing we'd particularly want to take home in our free time, but then we're not four years old.

Considering the audience it's aimed at, *Rumbly Tumbly Adventure* is perfectly reasonable. The controls are about as simple as they can (and need to) be; move with the D-Pad, tap A to interact with something, and that's pretty much your lot.

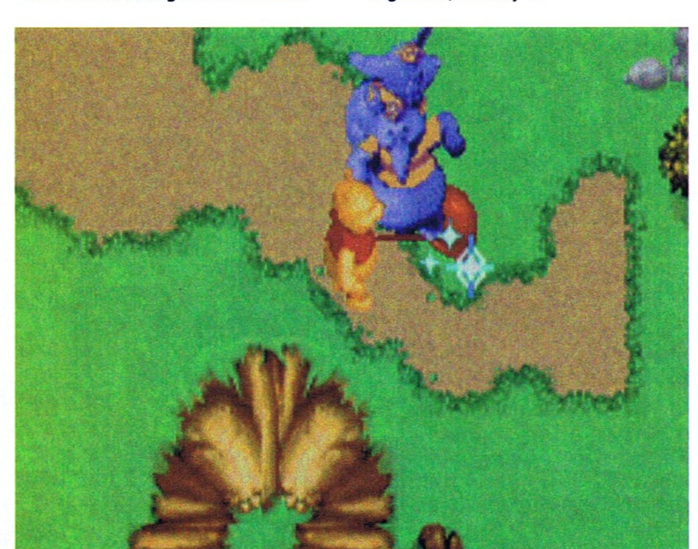
It's a very simple adventure and puzzle game with basic, easily understandable tasks. Find the key to the gate, push a block to clear a path, burst a balloon to scare away heffalumps, make a bridge over a river – nothing someone under four foot couldn't handle.

The visuals are very simple and very clear, with no confusion as to what you're doing and where you have to go next. It's perfect for anyone who's never touched a game before in their life.

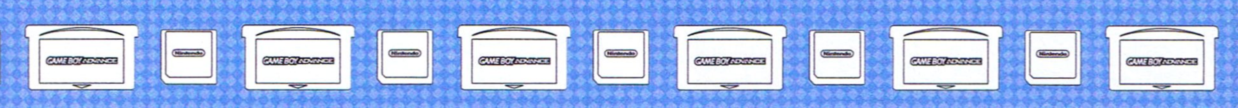
All in all, it's highly inoffensive and simple enough for anyone in your family who's only recently stopped soiling their underwear.

GERAINT EVANS

3



△ Those two blue lumps there (you know, the thing that looks like one blue lump) is a pair of Heffalumps. You need to burst baloons to scare them off.





YU YU HAKUSHO TOURNAMENT TACTICS





FROM: ATARI **SAVE:** ON CART **PLAYERS:** 1 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30



Well, this is hardly going to give the lads over at *Final Fantasy Tactics* HQ any sleepless nights, that's for sure.

It's a very similar game, at least in terms of its basic gameplay, but whereas *FFT* had a bewildering array of character classes, skill trees and special attacks and combos, *Yu Yu* has nothing particularly spectacular or engaging at all.

There's a very simplistic, basic feel to it all. Special attacks, which should by their very definition be flamboyant and unique, are simply stronger versions of basic moves, with identical animation. The monster design is uninspiring with little in the way of visual detail and, more importantly, little in the way of threatening AI. Virtually no considered strategy is required to take them down. To make matters worse, the pace of battles is ruined by the fact that you often spend most of the battle just reaching your target, let alone engaging it.

The only really redeeming feature is the ability to choose how you want your character to level up by assigning points to key areas. Oh, and you could say that, as an entry point to turn-based strategy games, it's simple enough for the very young and/or mentally disadvantaged. Which ain't much of a recommendation at all.

GERAINT EVANS

2

△ Attack animations soon get dull.



△ Taunt to increase attack power.

△ Travel to locations via this map.



△ Training. Not that you need it.

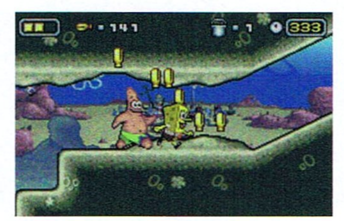
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: THE MOVIE



△ Little cheesy-pants hangs on to Patrick's nappy to glide to safety. Like the Gamecube version, there's something cheeky about it that stops us from hating it.



△ Dodge the exclamation marks on the road to drive to safety.



△ Spongey can actually build up a fair bit of speed if you charge him up.



FROM: THQ **SAVE:** ON CART OR PASSWORD **PLAYERS:** 1 **OUT:** NOW **SINGLE CART LINK:** NO **COST:** £30

We always approach this kind of game with thinly veiled disgust, but for some strange reason, try as we might, we can't hate *Spongebob Squarepants: The Movie*.

And that's quite odd, because there's absolutely nothing remarkable about it at all.

It's exactly wheat you'd expect from a Nickelodeon licence: a simple, side-scrolling affair. Jump over the gaps, collect the trinkets and stompy-bounce on the heads of your enemies all the way to the end of the stage.

Cutting-edge it isn't, but there's a certain cheekiness about it all that, at the very least, made us smile. And it doesn't really do anything wrong, as such. There are no technical problems that make the game unfair, the collision detection is fine, the controls are tight and Spongebob shambles along at a decent pace. So, aside from a bewilderingly stupid password system that uses picture icons rather than numbers or letters, there's nothing offensive to get upset about.

Still, being inoffensive is one thing; being a game *worth buying* is something else entirely. And, like almost every other platformer on the GBA, *Spongebob* is competing against some of the finest examples of the genre available.

Mario, *Yoshi* and *Sonic*, and even *Rayman* are all platformers with substantially more to offer. That means that even considering spending your money on *Spongebob Squarepants: The Movie* would be very foolhardy indeed.

GERAINT EVANS





PICTO ANIMATIONS

Just look what you can do with PictoChat. Send in your own animations and we'll print them here.

Last month we showed you what you could do with *PictoChat* as we produced a flick-book style animation of some bloke getting an arrow in the eye. And we were very proud of our work too, in a kind of 'three year old coming home from playschool' kind of way.

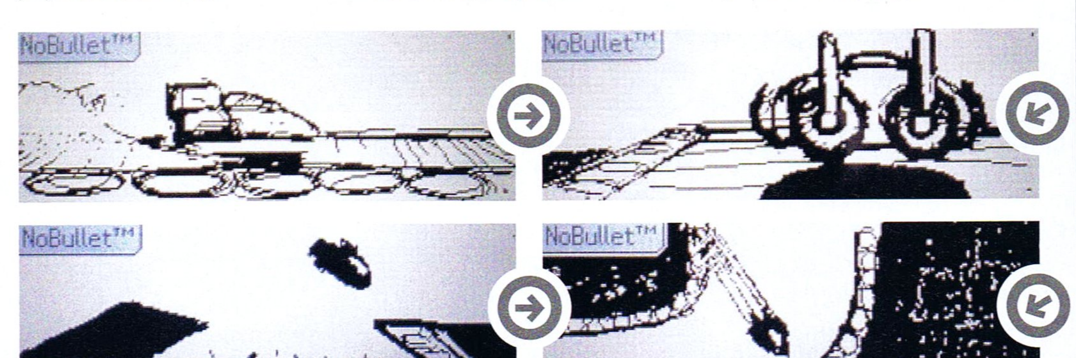
That is until we discovered what one *PictoChat* genius going by the name of NoBullet has come up with. It's an *F-Zero* animation and as you can see it's pretty amazing.

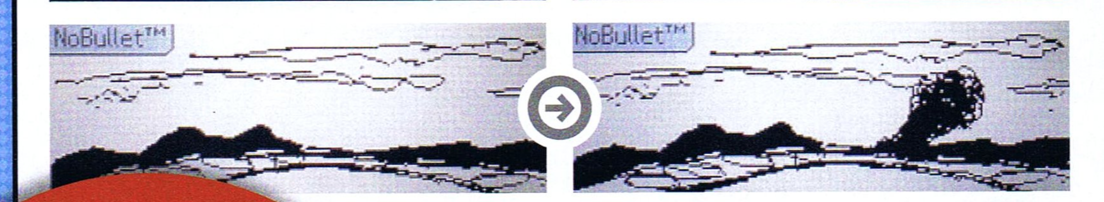
The *F-Zero* animation shows a craft speeding down a track and flying over a ramp before it crashes into a wall and explodes.

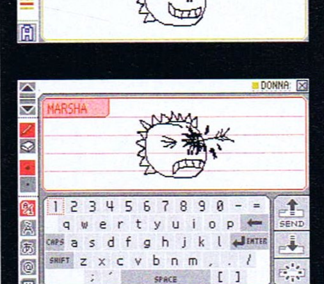
Impressed? Wait until you see it in action on www.ndsart.net. This great new website is dedicated to the best Picto art and features NoBullet's work and loads more.

If you are inspired to draw something great using PictoChat, see below to find out how you can get your art on these pages.









HOW TO DO IT...

1. Draw a little picture of something and then click on send.
2. Now copy that picture back into your drawing board and make a little change to it before sending it again.
3. Now copy that picture onto your drawing board again and edit it for the third frame in the animation. Keep sending and copying your picture back and forth – making little changes along the way.
4. You can have up to thirty five frames of animation stored at any one time, the amount you have is shown by the meter to the left-hand side of the message log.
5. Once you've finished your final frame of your animation, press the up arrow to flick back through the message log until you reach the top.
6. Now hold down the left shoulder button and then half a second later hold down the right shoulder button.

N·GC POCKET

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

We want your Pictochat artwork

You don't have to draw an amazing flick-book style animation like the *F-Zero* one above. If you like, you can just send any pictures you've drawn with your stylus.

As you can't save your pictures on the DS this is what we'd like you to do. When you've finished with your Picto art, turn the lights off, take a photo with a digital camera and send it as an email (titled Pictoart) to ngc@futurenet.co.uk. If you haven't got access to a digital camera, just send a normal photograph to Pictoart, NGC, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath. We'll print the best pictures every month.


MORE GAMES THAN ANY OTHER MAG!
50 CENT - THE GAME!
First ever shots of Fiddy's GTA-'em-up!
XBOX 2! PS3! PSP!
Hot info on YOUR next console!
WRESTLEMANIA 21
The only hands-on verdict you can trust!
PC
DS
GAMES MASTER
THE MASTER OF GAMES SINCE 1993
April 2005 Issue 158
Mag + Book £3.25
LAUNCH SPECIAL!
NINTENDO DS™
Every game reviewed!
NEW
MARIO KART!
DRAGON BALL Z!
THE MATRIX!
See 'em NOW!
UK REVIEW + TIPS!
GRAN TURISMO™ 4
METAL GEAR SOLID 3
PS2's BIG games rated and beaten!
SPLINTER CELL
WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!
CHAOS THEORY
The greatest Splinter Cell EVER! ONLY IN GM!
HUGE GAMES!
THE GODFATHER
STAR FOX ASSAULT
DOOM 3 XBOX
LEGO STAR WARS
FIFA STREET
REPUBLIC COMMANDO
MIDNIGHT CLUB 3
THE PUNISHER
137 GAMES! 689 SCREENS!
future publishing
Media with passion
GM158 APRIL 2005 £3.25
gamesradar.com
BRITAIN'S
NG MULTI-FORMAT MAGAZINE!
FREE! CHEATS BOOK
WIN! £1000
GAMES MASTER
NINTENDO DS
GRAN TURISMO 4
METAL GEAR SOLID 3
WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!
SPLINTER CELL
CHAOS THEORY
BRITAIN'S BIGGEST SELLING MULTI-FORMAT MAGAZINE!
ON SALE NOW!



OUR PROMISE

Our reviewers are the most talented and knowledgeable Nintendo fans in the business. We don't only play games at work – we play them at home too, just like you. We ensure that we've played games through to the end so that we can give you a proper verdict – and one that saves you from wasting money.

NGC THE VERDICT YOU DESERVE!

REVIEWS

SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY

Can the bug-eyed secret agent redeem himself after the 'broken' final level of his last game? Watch us sneak up on the truth! P72

WARNING! SPOILERS AHOY! OUR REVIEWS CONTAIN SENSITIVE INFO!

BATEN KAITOS

Namco play their cards right in this surprisingly enjoyable deck-building RPG. If you've already milked *PSOIII* dry, see... P68

GHOST RECON 2

Truly the Clanciest of all the Clancy games. If you enjoy telling people to shoot other people, then head to... P74

KAO THE KANGAROO 2

Come on, admit it, this is what you paid the cover price for. We make like a marsupial for the entirety of... P78

HOW IT WORKS...

Our reviews are the most comprehensive on Earth. We devote more pages to the games you want to know about, and give you loads of detail. We don't rest until we've played a game enough to pinpoint ALL of its strengths and weaknesses, and are able to deliver the most honest, no-nonsense verdicts around.



WINNIE THE POOH RUMBLY TUMBLY ADVENTURE

What's worse than having a Scout in your pocket? A Pooh in your pant... no, wait that's not right...

P80



SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS THE MOVIE

A super-absorbant cheesy-pant runs, jumps and *collects* his way into the platforming history books! Yes. Yes he does.

P80

OUR SCORING SYSTEM

0-24
Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured this game is absolute crud.

25-49
A dissapointing title, stashed with nasty faults and likely to be short on any quality.

50-74
Some great bits, some not-so great bits. Decent but definitely problems.

75-89
Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.

90+
Rarely awarded, a 90+ is essential. Buy with confidence.

NGC STAR GAME

THE SCORE BAR

The verdict explained for you...

PROS AND CONS

Because we think it's important to provide you with balanced reviews, we'll sum up the game simply with some quick plus and minus points.

+
- Nice to see Toad getting his head blown clean off.



- Same as last year's.
- The nightmares.
- Did we *really* need to see *that*?!

IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Not all games are good (unsurprisingly) – so you'll be wanting to know what the alternative is. We'll provide suitable suggestions here.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Killer 8
Capwrong
NGC/13, 666%
The sequel to the original. Now with added puppies, budgies... and chloroform.



VISUALS AND SOUNDS

Gamecube sends PS2 packing. Do the visuals and sounds show this?

MASTERY

How well does the game make use of the Gamecube's startling hardware?

LIFESPAN

Will it last you a lifetime or a couple of minutes? This is where you'll find out for sure...

3 VISUALS
Peach, with a shotgun and moustache? Er...

7 SOUNDS
You could hear the sound of Toadette screaming for miles.

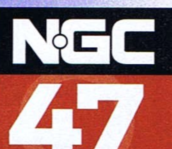
9 MASTERY
We have to admit that Daisy packs a mean mace.

5 LIFESPAN
Only one night, and then the police came and took it away.

VERDICT

We don't throw scores around – we give a game what it deserves. Here you will find the definitive verdict as to whether you should bother purchasing a game.

VERDICT
Mario Murder Party 7 has some nice ideas, but a sicker and sicker annual update is just too much...



NGC
47

MEET THE NGC TEAM

'Spring is in the air' as they say. So what does that mean for you chaps?



TOM EAST
"Spring? Well, I normally get a good shearing, and then some burly men dip me in rancid, urine-diluted chemicals... MEH!'



MARTIN
"The crisp cold air, the sprightly lambs frolicking in the fields behind my house and the smell of oil as I polish my shotgun."



PAUL
"Ladies. Ladies working on their tans. Me working on my tan with some tanned ladies." Anything else...? "What else is there?"



GERAINT
Daffs? The sound of close-harmony singing wafting through the valleys, right? "Have I ever told you how much I hate you all?".



SIMPSON
"Photographing BMX riders pulling off 'sick tricks' and then getting mummy to clean up my scabby knees when I done a booboo."



CLANCY
"Is it black?" No Tom, it's a season. "What about the sound of gunfire?" Only in your head Tom. "You don't like me do you?" No, Tom.





SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY

The quiet man is turning down the brightness once again.



As Nigel Tufnel wonders in This Is Spinal Tap: 'How much more black could it be?' And the answer for this game is the same as for his guitar: 'None. None more black'.

Just like the two other installments of this frequently frustrating, but lovingly thought-out series, *Chaos Theory* thrives on gloom, wallows in impending doom and goes bumping off foes in the dark. But this time Ubisoft have decided to lighten up this third division of the *Splinter Cell* series by letting a little light into Sam Fisher's drab world.

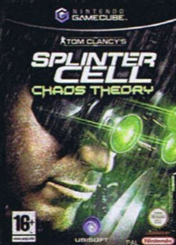
The first changes have added character and colour to the monochrome and monosyllabic murderer. For the glad-to-be grey assassin known as Sam Fisher has been changed into a slightly more humane killing machine through some smoothly rendered cutscenes, a willingness to show mercy to his victims and a little over-familiarity with his friends. The silver-fox is also meant to be more loveable (and more

> "CHAOS THEORY THRIVES ON GLOOM AND WALLOWS IN A SENSE OF IMPENDING DOOM"



INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	UBISOFT
DEVELOPER	UBISOFT CANADA
RELEASE DATE	1ST APR
PLAYERS	1-2
MEM. CARD PAGES	69
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	YES
COST	£40



"Chaos Theory hasn't radically changed its menu"



△ The guards will mostly spot an open door.

△ Set-pieces like this show off the game's use of shadow and shade.

importantly, marketable) due to an ineptly flirtatious relationship between Fisher and Anna Grimsdottir that is mercifully much less sugary and less annoying than Solid Snake's and Mei Ling's chatter from *Twin Snakes*.

> "YOU CAN NOW AFFORD TO MAKE A MISTAKE DURING A MISSION"

However, *Chaos Theory* feels consciously like a game trying to escape the dark shadow cast by its stealthy rival, *Metal Gear Solid*. This branch of the ever expanding *Cell* is desperately trying to grow an element missing from both of the other versions – pleasure. Previously, the *Splinter Cell* series has been akin to living a healthy lifestyle. As, while you won't enjoy the salad and the six-mile jogs, you keep munching and running for the one result – to stop yourself from dropping dead.

The same goes for the previous two stealth-fests. As a gaming experience, hiding in a corner waiting for a patrolling drone to stroll by is as dry as a bowl of salted porridge covered in the dust of a packet of shattered Jacob's cream crackers, but at least it stops you dropping dead all the time.

Okay, *Chaos Theory* hasn't radically changed its menu, but at least Ubisoft have decided to give you a few sachets of blood red sauce to make it more palatable. So you can now complete most of the ten missions after a few gouges, a light goring and just a touch of mayhem. While it isn't quite the 'silence or slaughter' style of freedom seen in *Hitman 2*, at least you can now afford to make a mistake during a mission. And one mistake is probably just about the limit.

The first casualty of this new relaxed regime is the hated three alarms and you're out system that tormented and tortured even the

WEAPON OF CHOICE

You can pick your weaponry before each mission, but only from three lists. There's stealth (which gives you the usual silent weapons and cameras) and assault (loud guns and ammo). If you allow your mate Redding to choose, you get a mixture from both lists.

SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY

Still a slow-paced stealthy challenge

△ The co-op levels are smaller, with each one taking only a few seconds.



△ Pushing the stick forward simply opens the door slightly.



△ The levels are varied from the stealthy sections to the war zones.

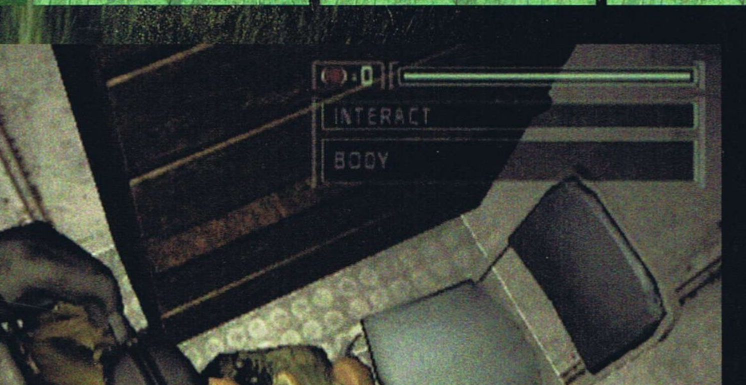


△ The enemy seem to pause between spotting you and shooting.

SPY VS SPY

The split-screen co-operative makes sacrifices in size and difficulty to ensure that it runs smoothly but you must still work closely with your fellow agent to avoid detection and pull off a few unusual moves.





△ As always, hiding the bodies of your enemies is vital to stay hidden.



△ Shadows can be used, but keeping hidden is a vital part of the staying alive.

hardcore. In the past this triple terror ensured that any mistake you made in dumping a corpse under a 40-watt bulb instead of depositing it in total gloom would be held against you for the entire mission, even if you'd saved twice and played flawlessly for two further hours. Then the moment that two more terminal transgressions were discovered by the same off-screen foes, it was suddenly game over and the pad was sent skittering across the floor before you reloaded and replayed the entire level.

With this draconian measure usurped and a new quick save regime in place, you no longer have to be the kind of avid player who thrills at methodical backtracking and squeals with delight at the chance to plough through the same level time and again, seeking perfection. Although these elements are still in place, adding replay value for the committed (or the should-be-committed), at least the rest of the world can



"Your skill is tested, but not your patience"



THREE ALARMS

The foes are relaxed but soon become bags of nerves.

■ At first the enemies are relaxed and chat to each other, often leaving their post unguarded.

■ With one alarm ringing they will gang up and search for you using torches or flares.

■ After three alarms, the lead is flying and the numbers of soldiers and their armour increases.

wring a little more enjoyment of the spy life.

In its place comes a still challenging but less capricious system where your skill is tested, but not your patience. So be fooled, this is still *Splinter Cell* from the tip of its hard nose and the core of its ice-cold heart, it just doesn't hate you as much as it once did.

For most of the levels, setting off one alarm gives the previously placid guards a warning of while the alarms will still fill your ears with their chilling honking before the enemy fill you with lead, the game no longer ends abruptly; instead it simply becomes much, much harder. Progress is easier but don't

"THIS IS SPLINTER CELL FROM THE TIP OF ITS HARD NOSE TO THE CORE OF ITS HEART"

your presence. And while they might normally have spent their evenings meandering around the vital terrorist base picking the sand out of their toes, they will patrol more aggressively. Instead of merely peering meekly

Still a slow-paced stealthy challenge

EYE SPY

Sam has three ways to see the world; the heat sensitive view, night vision and the electronic detection view known as the IMF. Switching between them constantly just to see where you are going in the gloom quickly becomes a chore.

HIDE AND SNEAK

Although you can blast away to complete the mission, your health doesn't last. As a result, the sparse health packs are vital.



BRASS NECK

Sam has two new killing moves. He can now open a throat or snap a windpipe. It's far easier than trying to grab the enemy, but might alert an enemy.



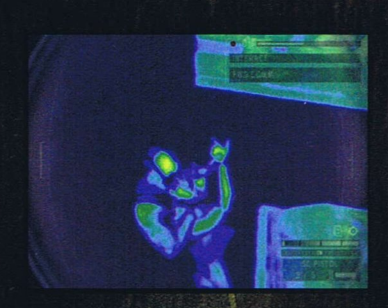
SOUND AND VISION

The light and noise meters show how well hidden you are. but your eyes often end up focusing on these bars.









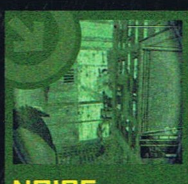
in the gloom, they'll whip out a torch and a bulletproof vest. And with their paranoia peaking and trigger finger twitching, they will finally investigate that Sam-sized darkened corner.

Then, once every alarm is wailing and you've woken every grumpy AK-toting terrorist in the base, your boss will call to cancel all of your secondary objectives and demand that you complete the job right now. But even this remains a tricky prospect for the reinforced enemy will now be on full alert, fully armed and full of adrenaline.

If shooting your way out still seems like an easy option, the problem of the missed secondary objectives will haunt you even when the visions of butchered freedom fighters have stopped dancing in your dreams. So if you don't discover where a crate of stolen weapons came from in the first mission, you'll have to tag the next shipment of shooters in the second, larger and harder mission. Likewise, if you happen to go a little crazy and cap your chief suspect rather than interrogate him, there is always another way to complete the mission that doesn't involve a restart and a volley of inventive swearing.

While taking this quick way out might seem like a shortcut to success and a way to rattle through the neatly varied levels in mere blood-soaked days instead of weeks, it is denying yourself a huge amount of perverted pleasure. Because, while putting a metal slug into the brain of a sleeping solider has its own sick joy, using your brain creates more of a warming feeling in the lobes and loins.

While Sam Fisher's armoury has always relied on the high-tech, it is the humble blade that has refined his collection of context-sensitive killing blows. With a shove of either shoulder button, the Third Echelon man can stun an enemy with a powerful punch in the chops, a knee in the groin or a knife in the back. Combined with the ability to drop onto foes from



NOISE ANNOYS

The game is more forgiving of your errors, it still tries to guide you away from total destruction and towards silence. Quite often you can't go in guns blazing because the enemy are in fact naive friends, or in one case because the room is full of highly flammable gas.

"Trial and error still dominate the game design"



DAWNING ON THE DEAD

In one particularly tasty moment you have to follow a guard through a series of laser-beam alarms. If you lag too far behind, the beams will trigger the alarm, but if you get too close he will spot you. The problem is solved when you realise that bashing him on the head and dragging his corpse through the beams does exactly the same job but with half the hassle.

drainpipes and lob victims from ledges, there are now more potential paths to the grave than if you taught a six-year old how childproof lids work and lead them to the medicine cabinet.

Crucially, the other area to see an overhaul has been in the noggins of the in-game grunts. Where previously the terrorists were sharp enough to hear the pin from a grenade drop, they always made life easy by refusing to look beyond blocked doors, by not inspecting every dark corner and by generally waiting to be picked off. Now, once they are spooked, they use torches, hunt in pairs and search aggressively. Sure, their AI still has a few farcical

SPLINTER CELL: CHAOS THEORY

Still a slow-paced stealthy challenge



△ Sometimes it can be simply too dark to see where you are meant to be heading, a problem not helped by a clumsy map.



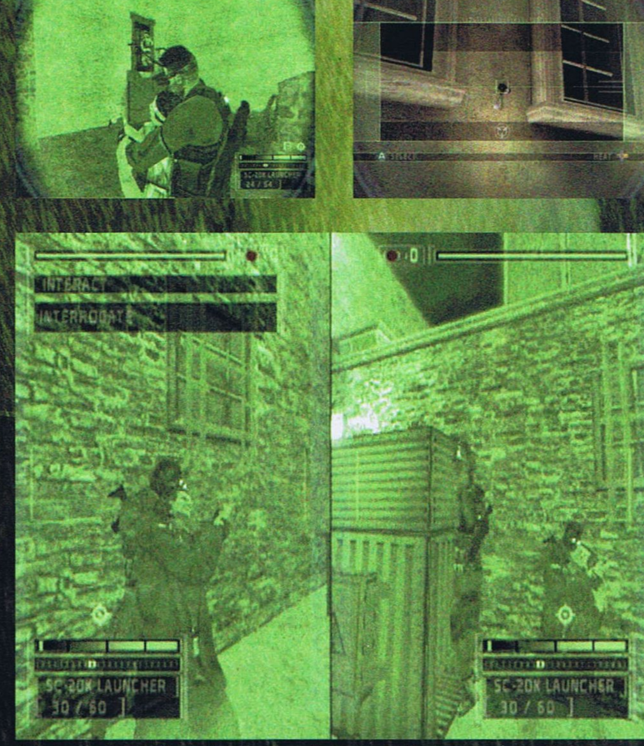
△ The shadows can seem a little harsh sometimes with very little graduation between total darkness and white light.



△ Use your mate to distract the enemy while you kill them.



△ High ledges and platforms can be used to throw foes off.



△ There are no gadgets in co-op mode, just a knife, a gun, and your mate.

moments with Benny Hill style chases in gloomy rooms, getting stuck in closing doors and having a taste for standing stock still in fire fights, but at least not every dark corner is a safe haven for Sam anymore.

Despite all of these small but useful improvements, *Chaos Theory* would be another small step on Sam's march to *Splinter Cell 4* if it wasn't for the two-player option. And otherwise spotting the differences between *Pandora Tomorrow* and *Chaos Theory* can be as hard to spot as Sam himself, because whatever else has changed, the control system still feels horribly cumbersome on the Cube's neat pad. Too many buttons are shared with other tasks and too many moves are just a slipped stick away from each other. So if you want to pull up a sticky shocker for a silent shot, the last thing you want is for Sam to whistle.

Chaos Theory does, however, have the split-screen co-op mode. Although this mode is boiled down to more of a co-operative shooter, with the missions tilting more towards murder than stealth, there is fun to be had. So while the small levels are linear and the distracting interruptions of loading and checkpoint screens are annoying it gives us all something to enjoy.

Despite the slightly more relaxed, playable feel, it is still a slow-paced, stealthy challenge rather than a brutal delight.

> **"DESPITE THE SLIGHTLY MORE RELAXED FEEL, IT IS STILL A SLOW-PACED CHALLENGE"**

Although there is more action in *Chaos Theory*, patience is still a virtue. Once you get past the freedom of the solo mode, alarms and trial and error unfortunately still dominate the game design, even if some of the harsher edges have been shaved off.

ALEX COOKE



MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

While most of the ten levels can be completed with maximum carnage, the game won't reward you for it. The high scores can only be achieved by stunning the guards and completing all of the three sets of objectives – primary, secondary and opportunity.



- The variety of killing.
- The co-op mode.
- Great water and reflective effects.



- Stripped back gloom.
- More waiting and hiding.
- Not that much has really changed.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Hitman 2
Eidos
NGC/82 91%
A less fastidious and more free-form killer with less hair and more blood.



8 VISUALS

Still looks great, but has lost some of the flashier effects.



8 SOUNDS

Music builds tension while effects give credibility and depth.

8 MASTERY

Great light and sound, but it could be pushed further.



9 LIFESPAN

Still frustrating, but progress can be very rewarding.

VERDICT

A tinkering more than a change, but it's better balanced. The co-op is a plus as the solo mode can still be annoying.



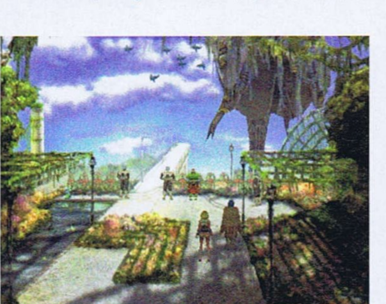


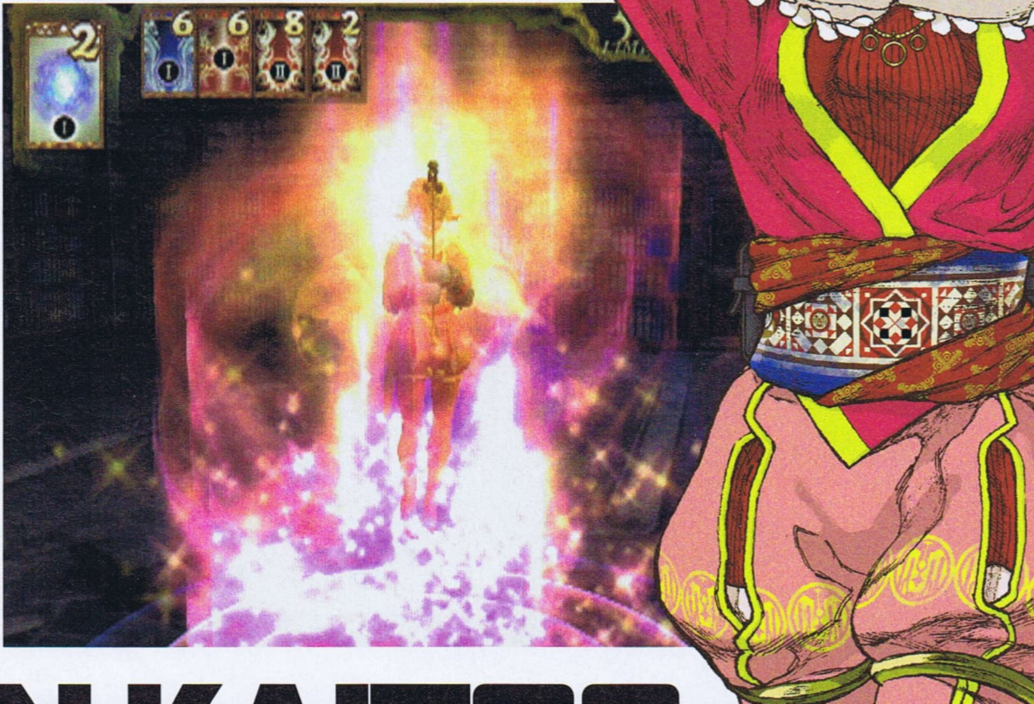

There's always some magic bloody tree involved.



As you progress, new members join your party.


The lovely shop lass will buy your photos.


The scenes are all beautifully rendered.



BATEN KAITOS



PUBLISHER	NAMCO
DEVELOPER	NAMCO
RELEASE DATE	NOW
PLAYERS	1
MEM. CARD PAGES	8
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO






Each location is on a floating sky-island.

Namco lay their cards on the table for their second Gamecube RPG



You've all had plenty of time to see off Namco's excellent RPG epic *Tales of Symphonia* by now – so you'll be pleased to hear that Namco have another two disk adventure lined up. Bear in mind though, that this is a very different beast to *Symphonia* both in terms of its overall structure as well as its battle system.

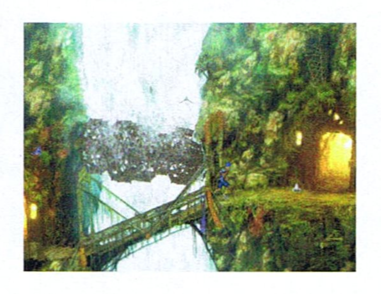
It's a card-based battle system, you see. We know for a fact that this system is considered dirt in certain circles – conjuring up images of *Yu-Gi-Oh*, *PSOIII*, and *Magic the Gathering* – but before you all go running for the hills, you might like to know that *Baten Kaitos* manages to inject far more action into card battling than you'd have thought possible.

Every useable item in the game comes as a Magnus – the game's name for the cards. Weapons, shields, armour, magic, food, potions: they all come on a Magnus. If you come across any useful items in the game, you can also capture the essence of the item and trap it into a blank Magnus for later use. Obviously, when it comes to









△ There seems to be a boss encounter around every corner. This one's particularly susceptible to fire techniques.

AS TIME GOES BY
You'll be amazed just how deep the card system really is...



Tapping the essence of milk into a card (or Magnus, if you will) and you can use it to heal your party, but leave it for a while and it will curdle into the more effective yoghurt and eventually, cheese.



Some items, like swords charged with fire, will eventually diminish in power, reverting back to simple, less effective, basic swords. So keep an eye on the status of your deck and watch out for deterioration.



Many items can change their properties altogether. A bamboo bud can heal, but eventually it will turn into a simple weapon, and then a fishing rod. Experiment with cards where possible.



One of the cleverest features is the ability to photograph any enemies you come across. These photos slowly develop over time and once they're done, you can sell them on for a high price.



Comboing a variety of cards can often create super-powerful attacks. If one of the cards in your hand changes mid-move into a new attacking card, you'll be able to deal out monstrous attacks.

battle, the main cards you'll want to include in your deck are weapons, armour and magic cards. Each character in your party can only use certain kinds of weapon or magic, so you'll need to construct a deck for each member in your party – and it's here that things get a bit clever.

There are a number of factors that need to be considered. Elemental alignment and the number value in the corners of each card in particular. You only have a few seconds to select your cards. The numbers on the corners of the cards can be used to increase the combo for that particular turn by either selecting cards of the same number value, or selecting consecutive numbers in a run. For example, if you choose four sword cards with the number value of one, two, three, and four in that order, you'll deliver more damage.

"MANAGES TO INJECT MORE ACTION INTO CARD BATTLING THAN YOU'D HAVE THOUGHT"



GROWING UP

To level up, you need to visit a church. Here, EXP can be traded in for a higher level – helping to boost your HP, strength, magic and so on. There's also a secondary level-up feature (Class) that levels up your deck – dictating how many cards you can use in a turn and how many cards you can hold in your battle deck.

The reason this feels like an action game is due to the time frame in which you select from your attacking or defending hands. You have to really be on the ball, concentrated and nimble of mind and finger if you're going to dish out the highest potential combo. It works brilliantly, feels fresh and - while not quite as flamboyant or exciting as *Symphonia*'s battle system – is both engaging, rewarding and strategic enough to make the inevitable repeated battles bearable.

Structurally, the game is pretty fast paced too – more so than *Symphonia* at any rate. The main difference here is that the Overworld doesn't present itself as vast, fully

"A very competant and enjoyable RPG"



NUMBER CRUNCHING

If it's high levels of super-complex statistics you're after – you've come to the right place.

The way damage is dealt is a little different. It isn't incurred the moment you strike an enemy, but at the end of a turn.

Each card has an element tied to it, and using opposing elements in one turn will decrease your damage potential.

The stats screen can teach you which cards work best together.

explorable continents. Instead, you have one Overworld map from which you can select one of the many island destinations. Each island also has its own map, each with various locations linked by paths. Once you've travelled the paths on the island once, you don't have to use them again. Instead, just move the character over the destination of your choice and select it. This certainly has its advantages, especially when it comes to backtracking. In this respect *Baten Kaitos* is much more convenient than other RPG's.

There's a similar approach to the story too. You never feel as though you're spending too long on any single plot point. You're given a task, you head to the destination where it needs to be completed and hey-presto there's another plot development for you to chew on. While you're still party to the tried and tested fetch and carry quests from time to time, there's nothing on the scale of *Wind Waker* or *Symphonia*, which means you feel as though you're driving through the game at a more immediately satisfying pace. This easily holds your interest for the duration of the sizeable quest.

BATEN KAITOS

Card battling? That isn't crap? WHAT?









- Great artwork.
- An excellent card system.
- Quick pace.



- Horrible voices.
- Clichéd storyline.
- Very bland characters.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

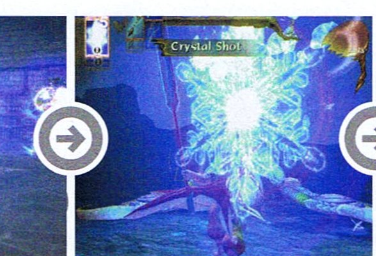
Tales of Symphonia
Namco
NGC/98 84%
Another RPG from Namco, only a little longer and more epic in scope.

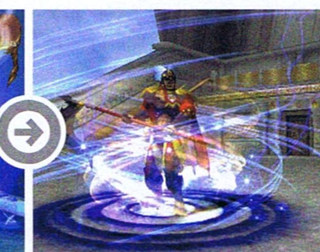


HAVE SOME

One thing that Baten Kaitos *does brilliantly, is pumping out bright lights for the heavier-hitting magic-charged attacks. Some of the high-end combos and attacks are absolutely blinding – just rewards for all your hard work.*









△ All the scenes have some impressive ambient animations, like this swirling whirlpool.



△ The billowing cloud effects are quite lovely.



△ Some of the character design is a bit poor.



△ As always, there's some evil empire trying to stamp its authority on the humble and peaceful islands.

So on the whole then, it's a very competent and enjoyable RPG, with its fair share of unique features. But it's not without its problems, the vast majority of which come from the game's overall presentation. Visually, it's a beautiful RPG. The towns, paths, interiors and exteriors are all gorgeous, high-res pre-rendered scenes blended with FMV. All are super sharp with plenty in the way of ambient animation (like swirling clouds, swaying grass, branches and leaves) and all manner of little details to help bring each scene to life. In this respect, the presentation is pretty much faultless.

However, some little niggles let the side down. The game engine fades to black and reloads the scene after any skits of dialogue between characters, or any events of any significance – which kind of breaks the flow of things a little.

Furthermore, the characters can often seem a little out of touch with their environment. They appear as though their feet aren't quite connected to the world they're in. Again, a small issue – but it does shatter the illusion.

Unfortunately though, *Baten Kaitos*' biggest problem is one of overall atmosphere. There's just something about it that makes it feel less epic than *Arcadia* or *Symphonia*. The characters are nowhere near as charismatic, and although *Kaitos* develops each individual well enough for you to care about them, you'll never really grow to love them as much as you did Lloyd or Vyse.

> **THERE'S JUST SOMETHING THAT MAKES IT FEEL LESS EPIC THAN ARCADIA**

As we explained in our previous review, while you'll enjoy the game from start to finish, it won't hold a special place in your heart like other, better crafted RPGs do.

GERAINT EVANS

SOUND SCORE

Yes, we've changed it from the last review. The reason for this is, on our second run through the game, we turned the voices off it helped us to appreciate the game's sound a little better, particularly Motoi Sakuraba's quite excellent orchestral score. So there you go. Do yourselves a favour and turn the voices off asap.



8 VISUALS
Some great artwork, imaginative scenes and lovely effects.

8 SOUNDS
The music is excellent – just be sure to turn the voices off.



8 MASTERY
Very well paced with interesting card-based features.

8 LIFESPAN
It took us just under 50 hours, including side quests.

VERDICT
A very solid RPG that's beautiful and rewarding enough to make the time investment worthwhile.

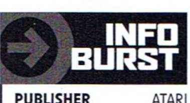


DRAGONBALL Z

Part fighting game, part board game, all mediocre



△ Combos still work when you're down, and you have no control over when you get up. Annoying.



INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	ATARI
DEVELOPER	DIMPS
RELEASE DATE	OUT NOW
PLAYERS	1-4
MEM. CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£29.99







DRAGONBALL Z BUDOKAI 2

Brilliant! A mediocre fighting game!



Dragonball Z, purveyor of plots that completely baffle all but the die-hard fans, and battles between characters that last a bare minimum of three episodes.

To be fair, though, Dragonball Z is almost a dream come true as a fighting game franchise. The nature of the game fits the plots, action and characters of the cartoon so absolutely perfectly that it seems that the two should really be a match made in heaven. But having played it, maybe it's not…

The game comes in two parts: part fighting game and part *Mario Party* style board game. The board game aspect of it is a tedious trudge to get to the fights, and the fights just feel like something you have to get through to progress to your objective. It doesn't feel like the two halves compliment each other in the way that was intended. They just don't fit.

> **WHEN IT COMES TO THE FIGHTING THIS IS A BUTTON BASHER'S PARADISE**

When it comes to the fighting, unfortunately this is a button-basher's paradise. The way the special moves are performed is similar to *Mortal Kombat*, which wouldn't normally be a bad thing except that the vast majority of special moves are button combos. Therefore any idiot can execute one, despite having no idea how they just managed it, and beat you to a pulp.

To be fair, the game definitely looks the part – in some ways it looks better than the original cartoon. The characters are spot on and the backgrounds are fantastic. It feels like you're playing the cartoon. It's just a massive shame that there is no skill necessary to play this game. It doesn't have that one critical factor: longevity. With good fighting games, the more you play, the more you should improve, for as long as you play it – a quality sadly lacking here.

TOM SIMPSON



- Looks great.
- Will please all the hardcore Dragonball Z fans.



- Lacks depth.
- Requires no skill.
- Board game aspect is unnecessary.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Soul Calibur 2
Namco
NGC/85 91%
Simply put, this is the best fighting game available for the Gamecube.



7 VISUALS

Fluid, impressive cel-shading matches the feel of the cartoon.



6 SOUNDS

Sound effects are great, but the voice acting can annoy.

6 MASTERY

Silky smooth, no framerate issues. Okay, but not great.



6 LIFESPAN

Doesn't take long to complete, with no reason to return to it.

VERDICT

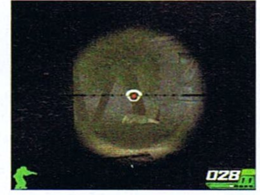
Although this looks great, unfortunately it doesn't play that way. This is only for the hardcore fans out there.



"These soldiers put the special into Special Forces"

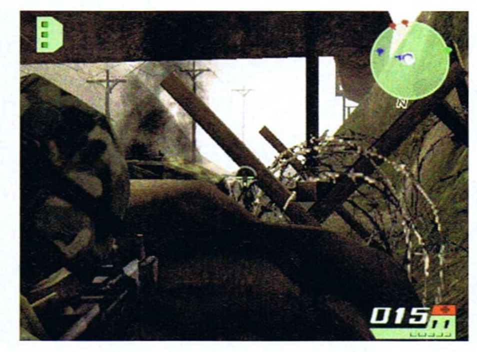

△ Maybe the ragdoll physics have been taken too far...


△ ... as he's hit, he performs an impressive somersault...


△ ... and lands on his face. Our judge gives that 6.6.









INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	UBISOFT
DEVELOPER	RED STORM
RELEASE DATE	31 MAR
PLAYERS	1
MEM. CARD PAGES	17
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£29.99



GHOST RECON 2

With friends like these, who needs enemies?



△ Cover is either total or zero. Only boxes, walls and trucks can be hidden behind and then the enemy can still see you.



It would probably save time, a few lives and numerous tears if the moment the first level of *Ghost Recon 2* began, the three AI-controlled, friendly soldiers climbed into body bags, zipped them up and buried themselves. If they did, at least your score might be a little higher.

In the world of squad-based tactical shooters, nothing matters as much as your comrades' brains. Because, in theory, you rely on them to help you survive, to win the war and complete the game.

But not in *Ghost Recon 2*, as these soldiers put the special into Special Forces. The AI that controls their movement doesn't hunt for cover or scan for foes; instead it becomes perplexed by bends and boxes. As you aim a bazooka, a grunt will almost certainly step in front of the muzzle the moment the trigger's squeezed. If you demand a barrage of grenades, they will blindly lob them into walls, leaving the bombs bouncing around your ankles. Which, judging by the amount of friendly fire in Iraq, at least makes this war game slightly realistic.

But you have to depend on these numbskulls and defend them because their failure means your game's over. So you must preserve your pathetic platoon by issuing orders through a command and control system that even a lapdog would find too vague and simple.

Why won't they do as they're told? Why?

KOREA OPPORTUNITIES

After a minor diplomatic incident, the game has been banned in Korea, but don't worry about the story…



Along with your own dumb grunts you have to escort other troopers and protect their thoughtless hides as well.



The lone wolf missions finally free you from your brainless battalion and send you off to work as a sniper.



Something is hiding in the gloom of this blank landscape. Unfortunately it's only more pop-up.



Don't bother with stealth, there's no point…



… enemies can shoot through scenery anyway.

All your platoon can do, though, is tag along behind you, firing wildly but never hitting anything. You can't order them to bound, throw defensive smoke bombs or look for cover, and you can't stop them pinning you against bits of the scenery.

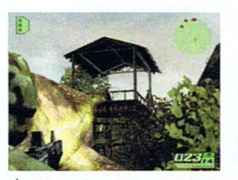
When the witless tits die through their own crushing stupidity, you die too, through no fault of your own. And then, as the rage wells up inside you'll die again – probably at the high-explosive hand of the same clumsy sergeant. Maybe, though, it'll be a random round from an enemy who fired through a tree, or the fact that you were reading a Tom Clancy paperback during the game's lengthy loading times.

But whatever the cause (and it almost certainly won't be your fault) you'll be forced to return to the start of the entire level. That's right, there are no

"You can't squeeze much enjoyment out of *Ghost Recon 2*"



△ For some reason you can't use enemy machine gun emplacements.







△ All you need to do is take aim and wait for them to walk into the hail of hot lead.



SMOG OF WAR

During moments of intense combat, all the colour drains from the screen leaving the world looking de-saturated and grey. While it is a nice idea, the horrible frame rate just leaves you thinking that the SCART lead is on the blink.





△ We had trouble getting our allies' attention.



△ The enemies sometimes don't notice you.

checkpoints and no second chances in *Ghost Recon 2*, only feelings of frustration, injustice and partially digested bully beef.

So instead of advancing, you have to go back through the 14 levels, moving at a slow shuffle because your central character, Mitchell, is more of a groover than a mover. In fact, this cumbersome commando can't run at all and hitting the dirt takes two button presses and about 15 seconds. This means your clever tactical plans are quickly reduced to standing behind a crate and shooting, and shooting and shooting.



SHOW ME THE MONEY

Where some games are all cutscenes and plot details, Ghost Recon 2 is so lacking it seems emaciated. Apart from an opening full-motion video, the rest of the game is presented in the form of text-only screens and disjointed narrative.

Even when you can ditch the uniformed buffoons you can't squeeze much enjoyment out *Ghost Recon 2*. The reason is a frame rate that renders any mass battle completely incoherent. Also, the sparse scenery and repetitive textures make every one of the levels bland, while the painfully short draw-range often leaves you scanning the valley ahead for foes that haven't even been filled in yet.

The whole shooting match is painfully predictable. As you're forced down a narrow corridor of impassable hedges, every battle occurs at exactly the same time, in exactly the same way, with the same Commies running through the same brainless routines.

Within such linear levels there's no chance to outflank or out-think

FULL MENTAL JACKET

The only battle these guys are fighting is the war against brains



Since the game doesn't use a headset or have a system of sub-menus, you're limited to just four basic commands at any one time.



Hold down A and you can command your troops to provide covering fire, chuck a grenade, advance to either flank or regroup around you…



… which all sounds fine until you actually want them to follow one of these carefully chosen commands. Then it all goes wrong.



Half the time the grenade icon won't be illuminated, even if you place it over an enemy or at a target. Irritating.



Likewise, the covering fire command is fiddly to use and even if you can order it, it's rare for the troop to hit anything or anyone.



To make matters worse, pressing A also picks up an enemy's dropped weapon so you can't issue orders if there's an AK-47 left on the floor.



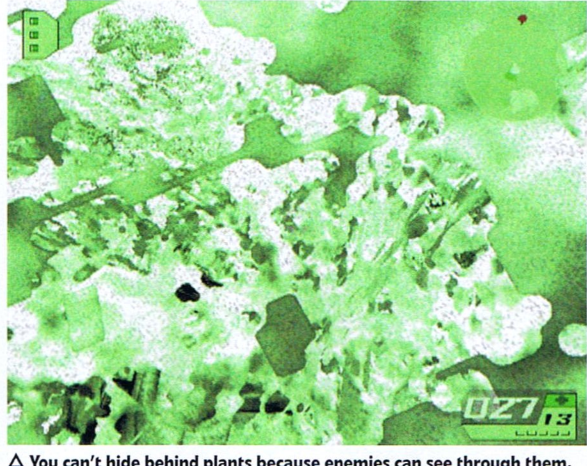
Reloading also prevents you giving orders while the counter ticks down. Why can't an officer click in a clip and speak at the same time?



All you can do is pick off the grunts yourself and pray that your blokes don't get in the way or get killed. Which they will.



△ Even destroying tanks seems less fun than it should be.



△ You can't hide behind plants because enemies can see through them.

the enemy. In this war, memory matters more than ability.

It's almost embarrassing to gun down your poorly animated foes. An overly helpful auto-aim makes even the most wayward rounds fatal and the bovine AI leaves the bad guys stood around in the open, but mostly the cringes come from the unconvincing, stuttering rag-doll somersault-and-pirouette routine that accompanies even a minor wound.

Sadly, any hope of breaking up the monotony of the main game has also been lost because of the total lack of multiplayer sections.

There's no deathmatch mode, no split-screen action and no co-op contests. So, in a hangover from the PS2 origins of the game, all you can do is rattle through the same battles as stand-alone quests with only the motivation of a few different weapons and some concept art to drive you forward.

It's almost impossible to pick a redeeming feature in this lacklustre and late conversion. Even the standard plus points of solid sounds or quality presentation can't be relied on here because, for some reason, your troops have the voices of nine-year-old boys, while much of the presentation is based around scrolling text (sorry guys, you won't find any FMV or cutscenes here) and average audio.

Boxed in by linear levels and blinded by the frame rate, *Ghost Recon 2* is more of a suicidal turkey shoot than tactical blast. And compared to the likes of *Conflict Desert Storm* it's shallow.

In fact, putting a bullet through this team of the densest Ghosts ever seen and their tired port of an ugly PS2 game would be an act of mercy.

ALEX COOKE

ONE MAN ARMY



With no multiplayer options the game is seriously devoid of bonus attractions. All there is to distract you from the misery of the campaign are single missions that happen to be plucked from the parts of the campaign you've already played, a training mode and the unlockable extras. Which are fine, if you like looking at average art.

> **"GHOST RECON 2 IS MORE OF A SUICIDAL TURKEY SHOOT THAN A TACTICAL BLAST"**



- The auto-aim makes you feel hard.
- Highlights the futility of war.



- It isn't a shooter, it's baby-sitting.
- A bad transplant of a bad PS2 game.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Splinter Cell
Ubisoft
NGC/81 89%
Stealth and gadgets give this high-tech war some flair and a lot more brains





5 VISUALS
An eye-straining frame rate and clumsy animation.

7 SOUNDS
The sounds of war lack the depth of surround sound.

4 MASTERY
A step backwards in options, intelligence and design.



5 LIFESPAN
The levels are linear and extremely frustrating.

VERDICT

***Ghost Recon 2* isn't worth a fresh look. Inferior to the original, it deserves a thorough exorcism. With a hammer.**



NGC 49

IT'S A GEM
Collect these purple gems to unlock mini-games. Here you have to button bash to make the beavers chop down the trees.

PAC MAN
Every time you punch an enemy, the word 'pac' will flash on screen in a cartoon bubble. Biff or pow maybe, but 'pac'? What does 'pac' mean?

YOU'RE A STAR
You can avoid enemies, but you'll miss out on power boosting stars. Collect 50 stars and your attacks will be beefed up, so you can take out pirates with one tail-spin, punch or butt bounce.

INFO BURST

PUBLISHER	JOWOOD
DEVELOPER	TATE
RELEASE DATE	15TH APRIL
PLAYERS	1
MEM. CARD PAGES	5
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
COST	£30

KAO THE KANGAROO ROUND 2

Mario won't be worried...

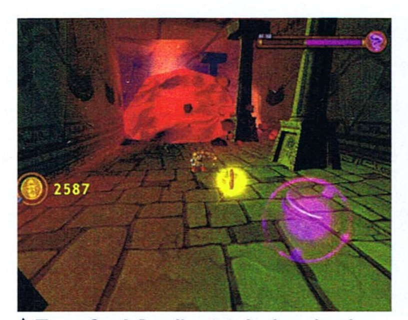
Boomerangs that don't come back, birds that can barely fly and a kangaroo that rarely hops; if you already think that this sounds a bit stupid, wait until you're ice skating in the middle of a volcano. But then a platformer starring a boxing kangaroo with basic badger herding skills was never going to be sensible, was it?

This is *Rayman* crossed with *Crash Bandicoot* and it ticks all the standard platform boxes. So there's the volcano level where Kao has to hop on moving platforms to avoid the molten lava below, then of course there is an arctic area where you slip on icy platforms and go snowboarding. And what platformer would be complete without an underwater section with our mighty hero swimming around, saving turtles and being attacked by odd-looking fish? Mario has a lot to answer for.

Yet, while the plumber is always moving on to new things, Kao seems stuck in 1995, back when the popular opinion of *Crash Bandicoot* wasn't 'ginger marsupial twat' *Kao the Kangaroo* isn't even as action packed as the Bandicoot's old games. There you could expect to see an enemy around every corner, but here Kao can happily amble along, collecting gems and coins for a few minutes before a bad guy turns up and starts

KAO THE KANGAROO

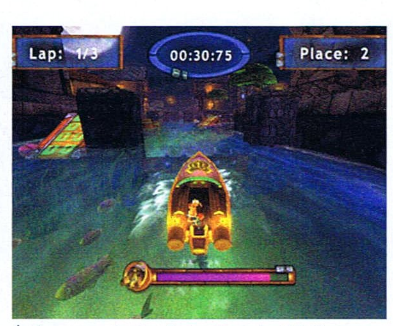
If you liked *Crash Bandicoot*… Wait, don't hit me!



△ These *Crash Bandicoot* style chase levels are the only time you'll see the kangaroo hop.



△ Kao is a genius. Gasp in amazement as he clings onto a vine with his ears.



△ There are loads of shortcuts in this three-lap speedboat race. Win and earn big money.



△ Let's forget the badger herding and snowboarding for a minute and get involved in some proper platform leaping in a good old lava level.



△ Carlos is a crap bird. After five flaps he gets tired and falls in the sea.




△ You've got a boomerang, he's got a shotgun. Seems slightly unfair.

BOSS BAITING

Skip the chat at the start of a boss battle and you'll miss some vital information. You are actually told what to do! Here, shoot the Octopus' tentacles until they all fly off. Then slam a rocket up his arse. Three rockets will do the trick.



shooting at you.

When you get shot by a bad guy for the fiftieth time in a row you will be wishing for an easier life. Either that or for an AK-47 rather than a poxy boomerang.

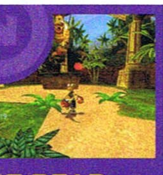
See, although there aren't that many enemies, *Kao the Kangaroo* can be painfully tough. Take Carlos, the Crazy Pelican - he can't fly properly, so when you're on his back you've got to swoop into fish (that for some reason are floating in mid-air) to give him the energy to travel long distances. You have to time each flap perfectly or it's game over.

Yet it's moments like these, the badger herding, snowboarding and speedboat racing that make sure this won't be entering the brown zone. Without these, it would be as tedious as last month's *Robots* (38%), with you just wandering around collecting coins and gems. The speedboat racing is quite good if a bit easy. You have to race against two other opponents for the cash prize, but it's quite simple as there are plenty of short-cuts and speed boosts. So it's not exactly *Wave Race*, but it is a bit of fun.

The snowboarding section is definitely far better. You speed down a mountain and grinding on rails before being chased by a huge snow plough. As for the badger herding, that's just bizarre. As Kao hops on the back of a big badger and has to make some baby badgers hop into tunnels. Very strange indeed.

These moments are all mildly entertaining, but the fun doesn't last for long and leaping around the standard themed levels we've seen all too many times before is never exciting.

TOM EAST



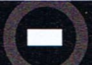
SO DEAD

There is nowhere to hide here. The enemy has bombs and shotguns, you've got a boomerang which doesn't come back. So, in other, words, a stick. This is so unfair and you will probably die about ten times before finally seeing them off with a few direct hits.

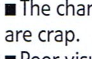
"WHEN YOU GET SHOT FOR THE FIFTIETH TIME YOU'LL WISH FOR AN EASIER LIFE"



- Speedboat racing is quite fun.
- Snowboarding.
- Badgers.



- Dated platforming.
- The characters are crap.
- Poor visuals.




IF YOU LIKE THIS...

Super Mario Sunshine
Nintendo
NGC/73 96%
Mario shows the rest how it's done. You won't want to play Kao again after this.



5 VISUALS



The levels are a little small, but it's still quite blocky.

5 SOUNDS

There are some nice 'boings' when Kao can be arsed to hop.



5 MASTERY

Shiny, but doesn't exactly make use of Gamecube's power.

5 LIFESPAN

It's pretty short, you'll complete Kao in a couple of days.

VERDICT

Apart from badger herding, there is nothing new here. This game could have been made for the N64.






△ It's burger-racing and it's rubbish.


△ Patrick! This bit will make you wee.


△ A Rice Krispies Square with a face on it. Now that's character design.

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS THE MOVIE

The pink one's fun – it's a shame he's brought his mate along.



Having strapped on our steel-toed reviewing boots and prepared to kick us some spongey arse, it came as something of a disappointment to find that this one isn't actually all that bad.

We're not suggesting that Spongebob might be the next Mario. Far from it. In fact the best parts of this game come when our poriferan hero takes a back seat and lets his friend Patrick step into the limelight.

Being a far more expressive character than a yellow box with a stupid face slapped on one side, Patrick's scenes are actually fun to play. Relatively.

There's one excellent bit where, having stepped onto an icy floor, Patrick slides around with arms outstretched and stumpy legs akimbo, his tongue lolling like a dead fish in his gaping mouth. For a good ten minutes or so, it was by far the funniest thing we'd ever seen.

Were it not for the likelihood that most people can find ways to make £30 of entertainment last a little longer than this, we'd say it was worth the admission price alone.

Other than that, we're talking 3D platforming business as usual, spoiled by more than its fair share of annoyingly amateurish moments.

On a fairly regular basis characters walk halfway into solid objects. Painful. And the otherwise smooth animation becomes ruinously jerky during the burger-racing (don't ask) scenes. Also, it has the worst cut-scenes ever, consisting of blurry, low-res stills from the movie with a bit of speech stuck over the top. Whose great idea was that? We'll wait for Patrick to go solo, thanks.

MARTIN KITTS



INFO BURST	
FROM	THQ
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD	
PAGES	9
WIDESCREEN	NO
GBA LINK	NO
COST	£30

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **61**


△ You have to burst the balloon to scare off the heffalumps.

WINNIE THE POOH RUMBLY TUMBLY ADVENTURE

Pooh's come to the cube! And it's everyone's birthday at once!



Kids have always been suckers for Winnie the Pooh and here's his first adventure for the Gamecube, just for them.

Obviously we'd like to give it a kicking, but that seems unfair seeing as *Rumbly Tumbly Adventure* has been made for five year olds rather than bearded, cynical 25 year olds.

You see, all too often childrens' games seem to have been manufactured on a production line with little care or attention. "Stick a cartoon animal on it and it'll come up roses" seems to be a thought in many coders' minds. But it appears that this was not the intention for *Rumbly Tumbly Adventure*.

OK, so it was never going to be a masterclass in videogames as art. But the aim seems to have been to remain faithful to the Disney cartoon in look and feel, which it does manage successfully.

The action itself takes the form of a simple role-playing game. There are five adventures to choose from, each of which revolves around a different character's birthday. There's a series of simple tasks and puzzles (find Tigger, get a shovel, that kind of thing) that are neither too tough nor too easy for the nippers.

There are a series of multiplayer mini-games, some of which are unlocked by playing the main, single player adventure. Unfortunately the mini-games never rise above the pedestrian, mostly because the characters are slow so chasing a honey pot around, for example, isn't going to be the most thrilling thing in the world.

This is, however, a very well made game in a genre of half-hearted licences and knock-offs. We wouldn't play it and nor should you, but if you want to keep a five-year old quiet…

TOM SIMPSON


△ A lot of care has been taken over the pre-rendered scenes.


△ You have to kick bits of scenery to collect honey pots.



INFO BURST	
FROM	UBISOFT
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD	
PAGES	2
WIDESCREEN	NO
GBA LINK	NO
COST	£20

NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING **60**



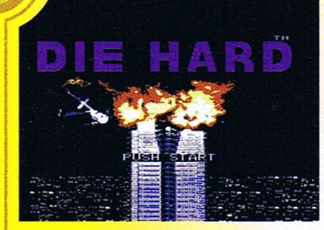
gamesradar.com

THE UK'S NUMBER ONE GAMES WEBSITE



20 FORGOTTEN ANCESTORS

Mario on a motorbike? Mega Man on a footie pitch? Tetris with hats? Yes, it really happened. Here's the 20 prequels and spin-offs you ought to know about.



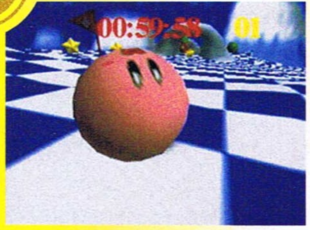


20. DIE HARD

Film-faithful precursor to Die Hard Vendetta.

In playing-the-movie terms, this NES blaster walks all over its spiritual grandson, the sweary *Die Hard Vendetta*. Viewed from the ceiling, as though God himself is watching through his fingers as Commandment number six gets thrown out of Nakatomi Plaza's windows, it's 100% f-ing free. Cussing would be much more offensive than spitting machine-gun fire into someone's neck, see.

Fact! So faithful to the flick that you lose 'foot power' for stomping on broken glass. But the ickle Bruce Willis that you control isn't wearing a vest, for some reason.





19. KIRBY AIR RIDE

Binned on N64; dragged out of the trash for GC.

It's no surprise that the Gamecube *Kirby Air Ride* is about as much fun as ironing. After all, it's the lovechild of two cancelled N64 games. One was *Kirby Bowl*, in which you controlled what appeared to be a gob of chewing gum rolling around on a kitchen tablecloth; the other was *Kirby Air Ride 64*, binned before launch for being too boring. Luckily, this meant we were spared a distressing attempt at 'cool' as Kirby was going to sport a — get this! — baseball cap.

Fact! *Kirby Air Ride 64* had an infinite number of courses,





18. HATRIS

Who knew Tetris could be so dull?

Alexey Pajitnov, the Russian responsible for *Tetris*, must have watched astonished as his brain vomited up this sequel to the coloured-bricks masterpiece. *Hatris* (d'ya see what they did there?) involved hats dropping onto multiple clones of Alexey's apparently dismembered head. Still, it instantly solved the age-old *Tetris* problem of falling blocks ruining your sleep – *Hatris* was so intensely dull that it guaranteed you instant, blissful kip.

Fact! Alexey also did a game called Welltris. It's Tetris. In a well. And it's three-dimensional.



17. WAVE RACE

Long-forgotten granddaddy of Blue Storm.

Yer man on the street probably reckons *Wave Race 64* revved up Nintendo's waterski franchise, but *actually* it was this Game Boy cutie, now 13 years old. It's hard to see why the Game Boy version of *Wave Race* remains one of the handheld's biggest-ever sellers, though. The engine noise is like a car alarm and the handling's little better than a supermarket trolley – an aquatic, jet-powered supermarket trolley with a man in a wetsuit sitting on top of it.

Fact! *Wave Race*'s main programmer has gone on to head up the *Hamtaro* series.





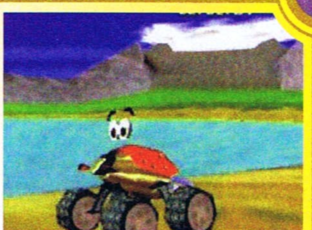
16. RIQA

Pre-Rogue Ops feminine firepower.

Ask Bits Studios if its decent stealth marathon, *Rogue Ops*, is actually the reconstituted corpse of never-released N64 blaster *Riqa*, and they'll deny it. But the only two *Riqa* screenshots in existence tell a different tale. Throw a bucket of peroxide over that stealth-suited, gun-toting grrrl and hello, it's Nikki Connors; plus, that interior bears more than a passing resemblance to the museum on *Rogue Ops*' second level, wouldn't you agree?

Fact! Bits also have a forgotten sequel: *Wizards*, an unreleased follow-up to the GB's *Warlocked*.





15. BUGGIE BOOGIE

What Smuggler's Run could have been.

As you stroke the copy of Angel Studios' *Smuggler's Run: Warzones* lying forlornly in your local GAME's second-hand bargain bin, keep in mind that it's the result of a game that never even saw a shop shelf. *Smuggler's Run* nicks its idea, physics and rolling landscapes from Angel's own (grossly mispelled) N64 car combat game, *Buggie Boogie*, which was three years in development and then killed right off.

Fact! Nintendo design god Shigeru Miyamoto personally mentored Angel's Frederic Marcus – who then defected to Microsoft.



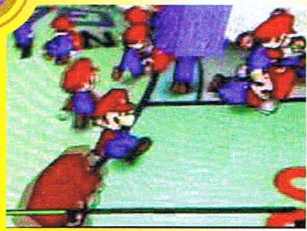


14. DINOSAUR PLANET

Look! It's Star Fox Adventures – minus the fox.

Shigeru Miyamoto loves a good joke – just look at his hair. But there's many a true word spoken as he jests away. Before 2001, *Star Fox Adventures* was a Rare adventure called *Dinosaur Planet* that kept getting endlessly delayed. Shigsy chuckled about ordering Rare to shoehorn in Fox McCloud, and then whaddyaknow, he went and requested it for real. So we got Mr McCloud defiling his heritage by electrifying T-Rexes on foot. Bad dog!

Fact! *Dino Planet*'s Krystal was kept in but her brother and co-star, Sabre, got the boot.





13. 100 MARIOS

...which turned into 100 Pikmin.

There's probably truth to the tale that this was essentially the prequel to *Pikmin*. The first live demonstration of Gamecube's power had 128 whooping Marios tumbling around a circular monopoly board – replace the caps with leaves and flowers, tear off the hats, moustaches and dungarees and daub the resulting near-naked plumbers in primary colours, and what have you got?

Fact! 'Orimar' – an alternative Japanese version of 'Olimar' – is a reversal of the syllables in 'Mario'. But it's anyone's guess what that's supposed to signify.





12. KONAMI HYPER SOCCER

Before there was ISS, there was this.

Readers who have dents on their forehead from the meteor shower that killed the dinosaurs might just remember *International Superstar Soccer* on the Super Nintendo. But venture back even further into the swirling mists of time and you'll find this, Konami's first stab at the beautiful game on the NES. *Hyper Soccer*'s fast play and stylish visuals (apart from chunky goalies), made it a hit and happy Konami went *ISS* crazy.

Fact! The game's teams included ENG, SCO, GER, YUG and USSR – yes that's right, USSR. Told you this game was old.

20 FORGOTTEN ANCESTORS

"Today's whippersnappers probably think Radiant Silvergun is a porn star"





11. MONKEY BALL

Insert joke about handling big bananas here.

With the *Super Monkey Ball* series feeling so at home on the Gamecube, it's easy to forget that the game was born, without the 'Super', in arcades. The *Monkey Ball* coin-op was released in Japan in 2001, and – in suitably insane Sega fashion – had a great big banana where a joystick should be. Sponsorship from banana company Dole helped to offset the risk of launching a coin-op without a gear stick or angry fist in sight.

Fact! *Monkey Ball* had to make do without the multiplayer magic of the GC version. That'll be the 'Super' part, then.





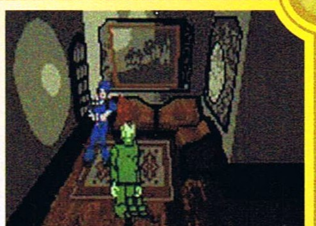
10. MADOU MONOGATARI

Without this, Puyo Puyo would be nothing.

You won't recognise the game, but those characters are probably ringing some bells. Japanese developer Compile, looking to add a modicum more personality to a new puzzle game, borrowed the cast from their unremarkable role-player *Madou Monogatari*. The puzzle game was *Puyo Puyo*, and that line-up of tea-drinking skeletons and walking fish is a key part of its enduring appeal. *Madou Monogatari*, meanwhile, finally snuffed it alongside Sega's ill-fated Saturn.

Fact! The walking fish fancies the mermaid girl.





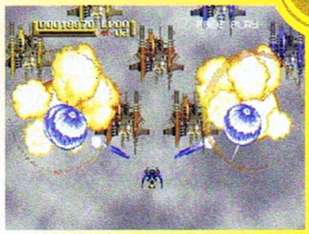
9. RESIDENT EVIL

Game Boy survival horror.

"We weren't confident the product would have made both consumers and Capcom happy," weeped a Capcom rep as he nailed the lid on the coffin of HotGen Studios' attempt to recreate *Resi 1* on Game Boy Color. Shame, as HotGen had recreated pretty much everything from the PSone version – but it used a colour palette that wouldn't threaten a set of traffic lights and zombies that looked like they'd shambled out of a Lego man's nightmares.

Fact! These days, HotGen are best known for those plug-and-play TV Game thingies.





8. RADIANT SILVERGUN

Ikaruga's insane big brother.

With the Sega Saturn a long-distant memory, today's whippersnappers probably think *Radiant Silvergun* is a porn star. But for diehard shoot 'em up fans, Treasure's title was a brilliantly insane seven-weapon, three-button masterwork. And without it, we wouldn't have official sequel *Ikaruga* (referred to as 'Project RS2' in its original Dreamcast form). Mind you, knowing that fact won't make your *Ikaruga*-blistered fingers and bleeding eyes feel any better.

Fact! *Ikaruga*-ites also argue that the game's a spiritual sequel to Amiga's *Project-X*.



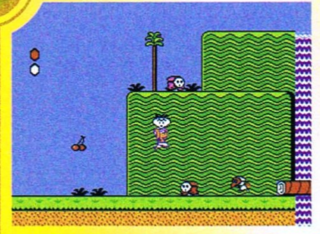


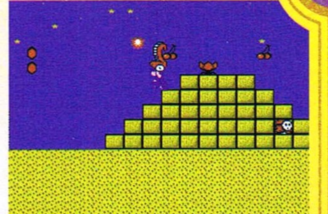
7. TWELVE TALES: CONKER 64

Pre-swears Conker that's been squirrelled away

Before Rare dipped the game in a dirty toilet to create *Bad Fur Day*, the Nintendo 64's *Conker* title – like its Game Boy sibling *Pocket Tales* – was a platformer so cloyingly sweet that diabetics needed to give it a very wide berth. All flowers, balloons and baby dinosaurs, it looked like what it was: a pretty but uninspiring Mario-alike. The change to *BFD* brought with it blood, poo, beer, urine and a Bullet Time pastiche that outgunned the real *Matrix* game.

Fact! Pigtailed *Twelve Tales* heroine Berri was made over into a lithe squirrel-magnet for *BFD*.





6. DOKI DOKI PANIC

The game that Mario stole

Look familiar? This Japan-only Famicom game was custom-built by Nintendo for an Asian TV station, then craftily repainted to create the West's *Super Mario Bros. 2* (aka *Super Mario Advance*). But even with its Arabian heroes, *Doki Doki* was soaked in Miyamoto's spit and polish. Its music and many of its enemies – Shy Guys, Bob-Ombs, Wrigglers – reeked of Nintendo's best minds. And reeked of Hiroshi Yamauchi, too, if the need to complete it four darn times to see the ending is anything to go by.

Fact! Mario is a prominent face on the *Doki Doki* box.





5. FAMICOM WARS

The Wars have lasted 17 years.

Don't be thrown by the name *Advance Wars*. The series began in 1988 when the red army first spilled the blue army's pint. Not much has changed since: build men, roll out tanks, wonder how a troop of five soldiers can survive an air-to-ground missile tantrum. We've got a soft spot for the '80s-era battle sequences, all over in a few seconds. But with *Famicom Wars*, you could grow up and have kids in the time the computer took to consider its next move.

Fact! After NES, SNES and GB editions, *Advance Wars* was the seventh *Wars* title.





4. MEGA MAN'S SOCCER

Blue boy becomes ball boy.

No way? Yes way. Platform god that he was back in the day, it's hard to believe Mega Man getting tainted by Capcom's attempt to shoehorn its way into the bustling '90s footie game market. No attempt was made to explain how Mega Man cloned himself to create a team of eleven footballing robots – who couldn't pass – or why the aliens in the crowd were allowed to bring their laserguns into the stadium. Fiery special moves, anyone? Ah, you're already asleep.

Fact! The plot involved Dr Wily taking over the planet through football… or something.





3. SWEET HOME

The unassuming birth of survival horror.

Haunted mansion? Abstract statue-based puzzles? Tedious door-opening animations? You guessed it – this early Capcom game from '80s Japan was the official forerunner of the unstoppable *Resi*. Shinji Mikami played *Sweet Home* and found his brain filling with "Braaaaains!" as the ghost-fuelled journey of the game's unfortunate news crew triggered his idea circuits. Presumably he was the only person scared by the game's floating, two-dimensional sprites.

Fact! *Sweet Home* was based on an unspeakably gory 1989 movie of the same name.





2. STAR FOX 2

The absent father of Star Fox Assault.

Much of what makes *Star Fox* such a juicy space treat today can be traced directly back to this, the follow-up to "Look, I'm 3D!" SNES showoff Starwing. It thunk up ground-based combat, 'free-range' flying and two new animal Arwingers but was cancelled at the last minute as Nintendo switched its brains and hands to the looming Nintendo 64. *Star Fox 64* – and, by extension, *Assault* – grabbed the game's best ideas and flew right off with them.

Fact! Even *Star Fox 2*'s bow-wearing Faye the Poodle isn't quite as loathesome as Krystal.







1. MARIO BIKE

Free-wheeling rarity that deserves a DS comeback.

Limited releases don't come much more limited than this. One of many games beamed to Super Famicom owners in Japan via Nintendo's 'Satellaview' satellite-broadcast system, *Mario Bike* was available for just a few hours at certain times each month. Download, play and (unless you saved to the add-on cartridge) lose it forever.

It was *Excitebike*, basically. But Nintendo's top riders (Mario, Luigi, Wario, Peach) just looked *right* on motorbikes. It was pretty fast, too, in terms of cc and the cruel clock in the corner bringing the curtain down on each lap, race or bonus just as things got interesting. It only took one cheeky overtake by a bleedin' Koopa Trooper to ignite a brutally competitive inferno. Throw in some neat Boo-leaping bonus games and you've got one hell of a ride.

As The Big N rediscovers the jewels hidden in its basement, surely a Satellaview game revival can't be far away? Wifi-enabled *Mario Bike* on DS would have us revving with excitement (and chuckling at Mario struggling to run back to his bike after somersaulting over the bars, the big idiot). This is one piece of history that should be repeated.

Fact! There were four versions of *Mario Bike* before Ninty pulled the plug on Satellaview.

NEED FOR SPEED

The first test drive of the world's biggest racing game.

EXCLUSIVE FIRST LOOK

PLUS!

- *Prince of Persia 3* previewed.
- *Advance Wars* (Honestly).
- Nintendogs reviewed.

Magazine contents subject to change – but only for the better!

Don't settle for second best. Get NGC INDEPENDENT NINTENDO GAMING

On sale: Thursday, May 12th



SUBSCRIBE TODAY

Don't miss a single issue of **NGC** magazine. Ever!



"YOU CAN'T HELP BUT GAPE IN AWE AT THIS GAME. IT REALLY IS THAT SPECIAL" NGC

Viewtiful Joe™ ©CAPCOM CO., LTD. 2003 All rights reserved



SAVE 29%

WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE AND GET A COPY OF VIEWTIFUL JOE FREE! *

Start your subscription from as little as **£9.25 every quarter** with direct debit and not only will you **save £14 a year**, but you will also receive a copy of **Viewtiful Joe free** as your welcome gift*

Call 0870 837 4722 now or fill in the form below

Code: M003 - Offer Ends: 12th May 2005

NGC PRIORITY ORDER FORM

☑ **YES!** Please start my subscription to NGC.

We publish 13 issues of NGC a year. Your subscription will start with the next available issue. Stocks limited to availability. Please allow 28 days for delivery of the gift. Details of the Direct Debit guarantee are available on request. *The offer is only available to new UK subscribers.

YOUR DETAILS:

Title ________ Forename ________ Surname ________

Address ________

Postcode ________ Country ________

Tel No (inc STD) ________

Email address ________

CHEQUE OR CREDIT CARD/DEBIT CARD - £37.00 for 13 issues (UK only)

☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to Future Publishing Ltd

☐ Please charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMEX ☐ Switch/Maestro

CARD NUMBER | EXPIRES

SIGNED | TODAY'S DATE

☐ **Direct Debit Payment** – JUST £9.25 every three months **SAVING 29%** (UK ONLY)

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit — DIRECT Debit

Please fill in the form and send to: **NGC** Magazine, Future Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST RLSC-SXSE-SKKT, Unit 4, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 9EF

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the manager: Bank name

Address

Postcode

Account in the name(s) of

Branch sort code

Bank/Building Society account number

Originator's Identification Number

7	6	8	1	9	5

Ref no. to be completed by Future Publishing

Instruction to your Bank or Building Soc.
Please pay Future Publishing Ltd. Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Future Publishing Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

Offer ends 12/5/05 Order Code M003

PLEASE RETURN TO:

NGC Magazine, Future Publishing, FREEPOST RLSC-SXSE-SKKT, Unit 4, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 9EF

Please indicate if you do NOT wish to receive relevant information about special offers or products/services from **NGC**, Future Publishing or any of its sister companies by ☐ post or ☐ telephone. Please indicate if you do NOT wish us to pass your details on to other carefully selected companies to enable them to contact you about their products/services by ☐ post or ☐ telephone.

We will use the contact details supplied to communicate with you about your **NGC** subscription. We'd also like to keep you up to date with any special offers or new products/services that may be of interest. If you're happy for **NGC**, Future Publishing and its sister companies to contact you in this way, indicate here: ☐ email ☐ mobile. If you're also happy for us to pass your details on to carefully selected companies so they can send you relevant information about their products/services, indicate here: ☐ email ☐ mobile.

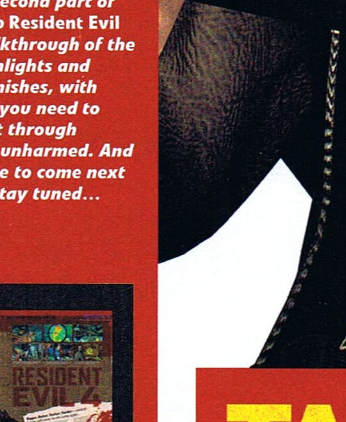
FOR OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS PLEASE VISIT WWW.MYFAVOURITEMAGAZINES.CO.UK

EXTENDED PLAY

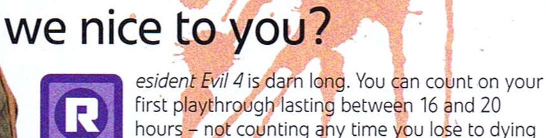
PART 2

RESIDENT EVIL 4





We've died 1000 deaths so you don't have to. Aren't we nice to you?



Resident Evil 4 is darn long. You can count on your first playthrough lasting between 16 and 20 hours – not counting any time you lose to dying repeatedly – and there are plenty of small secrets tucked into the game's nooks and crannies.

So, in a public-spirited attempt to help keep down the costs of controller replacement throughout the UK, we've pulled together six pages of hints and tips to help you survive the most difficult areas of the latest *Resi*. And even if all this isn't enough to get you to the bitter end, never fear: there'll be more next month…





WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

This is the second part of our guide to Resident Evil 4. It's a walkthrough of the game's highlights and major skirmishes, with everything you need to know to get through (relatively) unharmed. And there's more to come next month, so stay tuned…

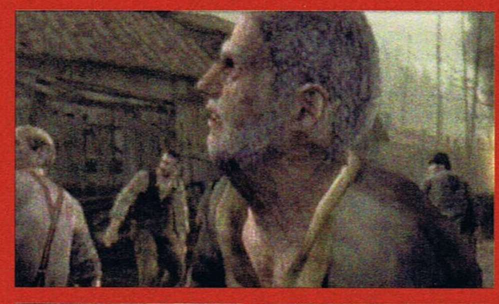


WHAT WE SAID IN ISSUE 104

The complete package easily matches Gamecube's top tier of games. It's as well produced as Wind Waker and Metroid Prime – and stands alongside both of them as one of the finest examples of entertainment the Gamecube can provide.



TABLE OF CONTENTS





MAJOR BATTLES



TIPS EXTRA
■ Stop! Don't even think of playing Paper Mario or NBA Street without these hints and cheats! p94



SKILL CLUB
■ The first rule of Skill Club is: there are no rules. Well, there are, but hey, try these challenges anyway. p98



GAME ON
■ You know that pile of games under your bed? Here's how to make them fun again. p100

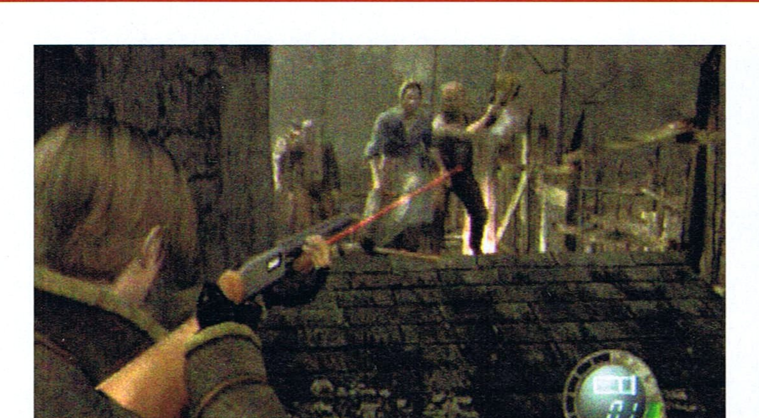


LETTERS
■ You write 'em. You post 'em. We read 'em. Then we write sarky comments. It's genius. p102

RETRO
■ As the great Minogue once said, all you can do is step back in time. Do it here. p106



DIRECTORY
■ Games ain't cheap, so before you give away your wonga make sure the title's in our top 100. p108



CHAPTER 1-1: THE VILLAGE

The village is the site of your first real rumble. It ends instantly after you've killed 20 Ganados.

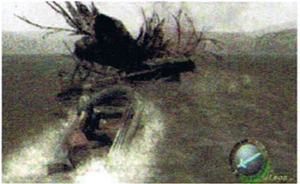
Start by ransacking the village for ammunition and then run into the north-central house. Head upstairs and grab the shotgun, shells, and grenade from the bedroom.

Jump out the west window and run around the roof until you see the Spinel. From this point, you can hold off the Ganados with ease. They have to round a corner to get at you, which makes them shotgun fodder. Keep blasting them until they withdraw.



CHAPTER 1-3: DEL LAGO





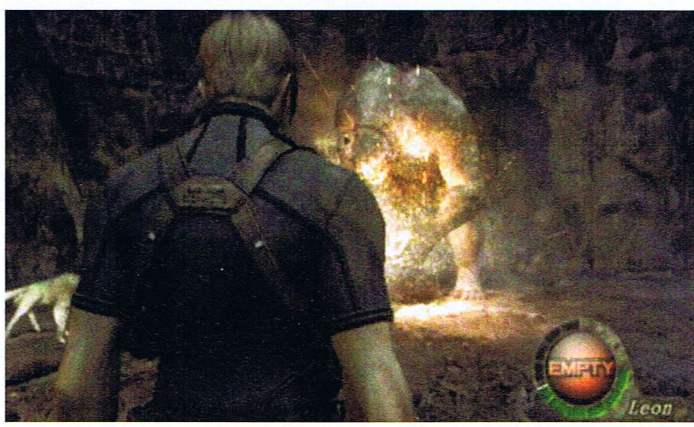


Your fishing boat comes equipped with harpoons but watch out: when you're getting one ready to throw, you can't steer the boat.

Del Lago has two big tricks. One is to knock you off your boat by swimming under the trees; fortunately, you can easily get out of the way if you're not trying to spear him at the time.

His other trick is to emerge suddenly from the water and capsize the boat, so if you can't see him, start moving in wide circles.

When Leon stops the boat and readies a harpoon, Del Lago is about to race headlong at you. This is your best and safest chance to spear him before he sinks under the water.





CHAPTER 2-1: EL GIGANTE, PART ONE

Upgrade your shotgun's firepower and if, by some fluke, you have 30,000 pesetas to spare, buy a rocket launcher. It's a one-hitter quitter.

El Gigante is big, dumb, and slow. Don't try to take cover in the huts because it'll smash them; instead, stay close in and use your shotgun and hand grenades. Take a few pot shots, then run away and repeat.

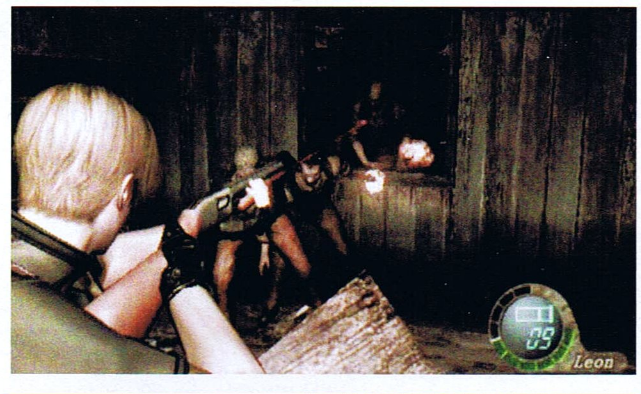
If it lowers its shoulder, break to the side or it'll tackle you into next week. If you freed the wolf in 1-1, it'll help you out by distracting Gigante, allowing you to shoot it from behind.

When Gigante's weak, it'll go onto one knee. That's your cue to race in, climb its back, and hammer A/B to cut into its parasite.





CHAPTER 2-2: UNDER SIEGE





At the chapter's end, you'll be trapped in a cabin, fighting off a seeminglyinfinite tide of Ganados.

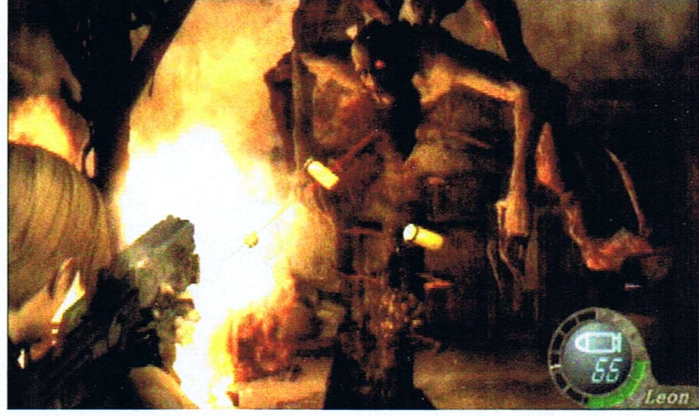
Before they attack, push bookshelves in front of two of the windows on the ground floor. This turns the other window into a bottleneck, allowing you to blast the Ganados that come through.

Unfortunately, that won't last, and the bookcases will get beaten down. Once it happens, retreat to the base of the stairs and carry on laying down fire, tossing in an occasional flash grenade to clear out tentacle-headed Ganados.

Luis can take care of himself, so don't worry about him.

When the fight moves upstairs, kick the ladders away from the windows as soon as you can.

Ganados will continue to rush up after you, but because they're constrained to the staircase, your shotgun or rifle should be enough to make pizza toppings out of them. Keep building a body count until the Ganados withdraw.





CHAPTER 2-3 BITORES MENDEZ

In his first form, Mendez is slow, but the tight confines of the barn work to his advantage rather than yours.

It's best to stay at long range whenever you can, switching from the handgun or TMP to the shotgun when Mendez comes closer. He'll be stunned for a second by an explosion, so use hand grenades or blow up the barrel by the ladder.

If you need a safe place to reload, climb up into the loft. There's a spot against the west wall where you can hide behind a sheet of steel.

After you've delivered enough punishment, Mendez's tactics will change and he'll start using the rafters to play hit-and-run.

Flash grenades, hand grenades or a clean shotgun blast will knock him down for a few seconds, giving you the chance to deliver big damage while he's grounded. Otherwise, you'll have to wait until he gets close.





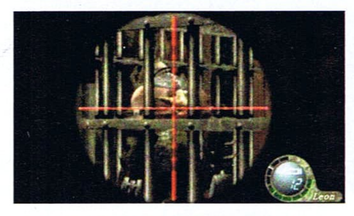
CHAPTER 3-1: THE PRISONER

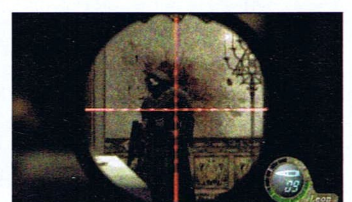
You'll encounter one of the blind, clawed prisoners shortly after you meet Salazar. If you make a loud sound, such as a gunshot, they'll immediately run after you and launch a flurry of slashes that can be instantly fatal.

You'll often encounter prisoners in an area where you can use something to distract them. In this room, it's the bells on either side. Shoot one to make it ring and when the prisoner's claw gets stuck, put a rifle slug through the parasite on his back.

When he recovers, he'll charge at your previous position; dodge across the room, then wait for an opening. Repeat as necessary 'till the prisoner's good and dead.







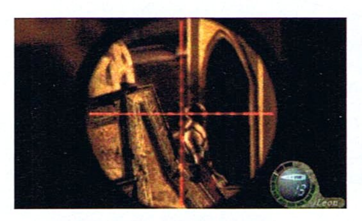
CHAPTER 3-3: STEEL CAGE DEATHMATCH

When you get near the treasure chest in the dining room, you'll get trapped inside a cage. Your cellmates are an Illuminado and a prisoner, and there are crossbowmen all around. Sheee-it!

The first order of business is to get out of the cage. You're right in front of one of the doors, so blast the lock off with your shotgun then run back into the dining room.

Ideally, the prisoner will get stuck inside the cage, letting you deal with the Illuminados at your leisure.

Otherwise, withdraw quietly and wait for the prisoner to turn his back so you can leg it.





CHAPTER 4-1: HOT LAVA

This surreal chamber is patrolled by large flameships piloted by Illuminados. There are three, each of which will fall into the lava if you kill its pilot.

Destroying the flameships will reveal treasures such as the Lion Ornament, which you'll need to advance.

The first flameship is an easy shot with your rifle. The second and third are harder, though, and may take a little practice to pull off.

You have to get the ships to breathe flames at your present location, then duck behind cover and snipe the driver while he's readjusting his position.





CHAPTER 4-1: THE KNIGHTS OF THE GRAIL

Leave Ashley in the hall outside. When you take the Queen's Grail, you'll trigger a fight with two groups of three Plaga-infested suits of armor.

They're all slow, and the axemen are easy to dodge. It's the swordsmen you really have to watch out for, since they swing from side to side.

A few Magnum rounds or shotgun blasts will tear the helmet off each suit, revealing the Plaga inside. At this point, you can vapourise the parasite with your rifle, or drop a flash grenade to despatch multiple Plagas at once.



CHAPTER 4-3: RIGHT HAND

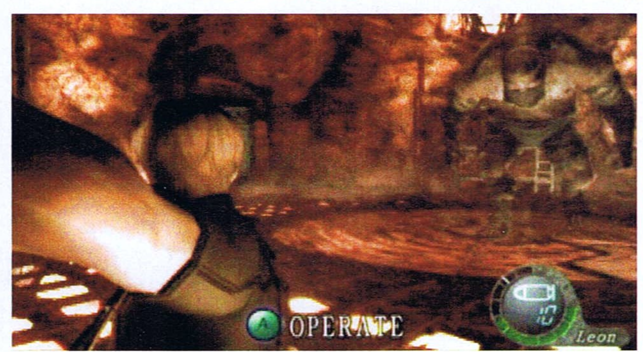
You don't have to kill Salazar's "right hand". You can simply dodge its attacks for four minutes, then take the lift to escape. It's carrying valuable treasure, though, so it's best to kill it.

When you activate the power to the lift and try to leave the generator room, the "right hand" will drop in and start stalking you.

Retreat to one of the canisters of liquid nitrogen and kick it over. This'll slow the "right hand" down long enough for you to kill it. How you do that is a matter of personal taste, but the rocket launcher is probably best.

CHAPTER 4-2 LOS GIGANTES









As soon as you reach the mines under the castle, start hoarding Magnum ammo.

When the Gigantes appear, you can cut your problem in half by throwing the switch at ground level to open the pit in the floor.

With the right timing, you can drop one of the Gigantes into the lava, but don't get anywhere near him while he's writhing or he'll pull you in after him.

That leaves the second one, who's tougher than his friends. If he drops his shoulder, break to the side or he'll splat you against a wall. If he gets too close for comfort, climb the scaffolding and use the pulley to escape when it starts rattling the platform.











CHAPTER 4-4: RAMON SALAZAR

Nothing will injure Salazar except shots to the eye on his monster head.

Get a few shotgun blasts on target and you'll open the otherwise impenetrable cage that protects what's left of Salazar himself. That's the monster's weak point.

Think it sounds straightforward? Well, it's not. What makes this fight problematic is that if you expose Salazar, the head will rear up and try to grab Leon in its mouth. If it manages to connect with him, it's instant death.

You've got two choices; one is to run away as fast as you can once the mouth opens and hope to dodge. The other is to launch a rocket into Salazar the moment he's vulnerable.

If this is your first time through the game, go for the rocket option. It's much easier, and ends the fight in about ten seconds.

If you need health or ammo, drop down to the floor below. You'll have to contend with an infinite number of spidery Plagas, but they only come after you two or three at a time so you'll have little trouble seeing off as many as you need to.

CHAPTER 5-3: "IT"

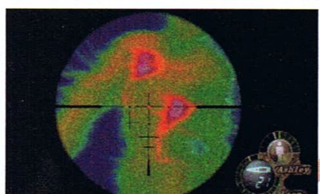
It's a good idea to buy the Tactical Vest before this point.

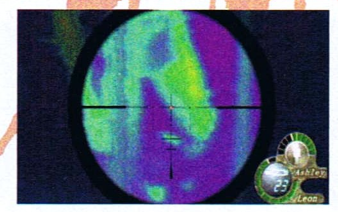
Don't bother fighting "It" at all while you're in the suspension cages – get out of them as fast as you can. Keep your fingers on the buttons in case of a quick time event and if "It" drops in front of you, just run around it. To open the suspension cages' gates, look for a green light and shoot it.

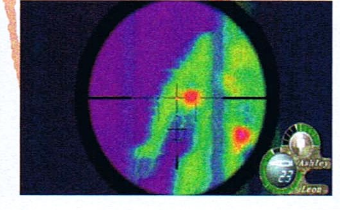
Once you're on solid ground, "It" will reappear. A few Magnum slugs will kill its body, leaving the parasite to burrow into the ground and try to attack you from below. Dodge and wait for it to come back out again before continuing your assault.



CHAPTER 5-2: THE IRON MAIDENS





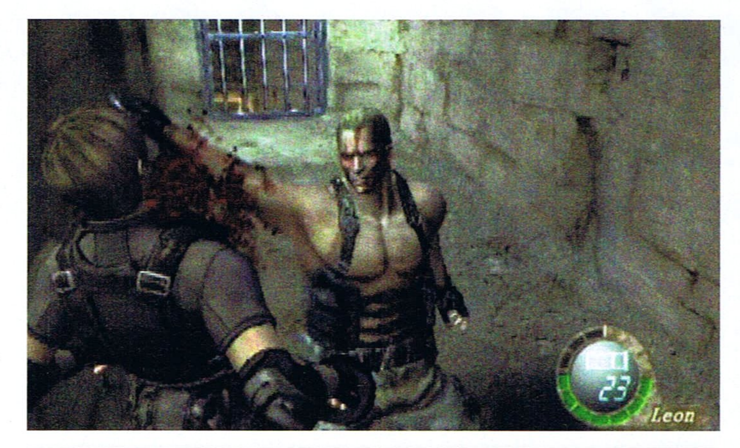
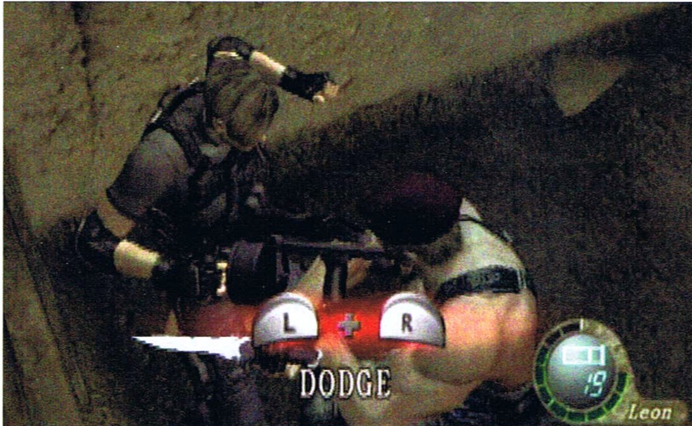


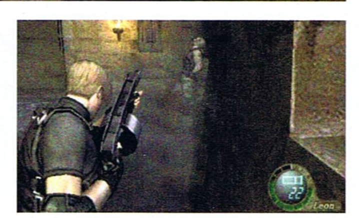
When the first Maiden stands up, tell Ashley to hide, then run through the second gate and close it behind you. Because the Iron Maiden moves slowly, the gate will protect you from its grab attack and let you shoot it from a safe position.

As with the Regenerators, you'll need to use the thermal scope for your rifle. Unlike the Regenerators, at least one of the Maiden's parasites is on its back. Kneecap it with the rifle, then quickly nail the parasite.

The second Maiden is on the other side of the room. You'll need Ashley to help you push the giant metal box into position so you can cross over. Once the box drops into place, tell Ashley to hide again, then run over until you hear the Maiden breathing.

Once it comes after you, retreat to your starting point, close both gates behind you and you're laughing. You'll have plenty of time to destroy the Maiden's parasites, but it'll need to open both gates before it can attack you.

CHAPTER 5-3: JACK KRAUSER

Max out your Striker's firepower before entering this fight.

As you head through the ruins, Krauser will occasionally ambush you. If he's got his gun, dive for hard cover. If he's swinging his knife or tossing grenades, avoid him until you get the chance for a QTE; after two or three successful dodges, Leon will dropkick Krauser. Now you can hit him while he's prone, preferably with the Striker.

Krauser's also got a squad of backup robots, which attack by exploding. Use your handgun to detonate them from a safe distance.

You'll have to drive Krauser off twice before you can continue. Once he drops a flash grenade, he's gone – for the moment.

After your second required fight with him, push the statue onto the pressure plate and pull the lever. This'll let you reach another lever that you passed earlier, so you can open a new gate and reach the base of the tower.

On the tower's roof, Krauser will play his trump cards: an extendible, bulletproof claw and a three-minute time limit. The easiest way to beat the new, improved Krauser is to fire at his knees as he approaches you. Give



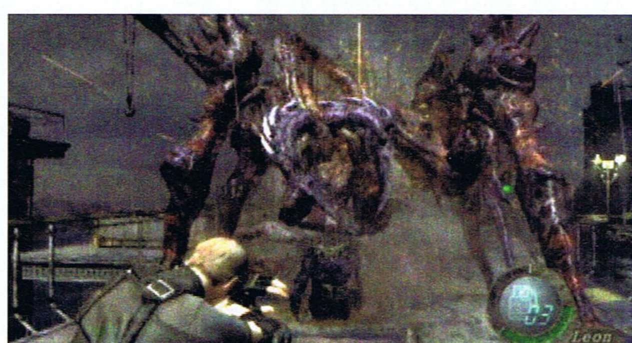
yourself some room to move and back away from him, then punish any mistake he makes.

He'll often leave himself vulnerable if he misses a roundhouse kick or heavy overhead claw smash. If you hit him squarely, he'll be stunned for a split-second, which is just long enough to hit him some more.

Keep dumping firepower onto him whenever you can, as fast as you can. If you've got at least a minute left on the clock when you beat Krauser, you're in good shape. Grab his insignia and get the hell outta there!

FINAL CHAPTER OSMUND SADDLER










As with El Gigante, you'll need to stun Osmund Saddler before you can do him any real damage.

Luckily, there's more than one way to bring him to his knees: you can do it with hand grenades, a rocket launcher or shotgun fire to the eyes on his legs and body, or you can use the construction equipment to drop one of the cranes' payloads on top of him.

When he's stunned, run towards him so Leon can climb up and stab him in the eye.

Saddler's dangerous in close combat, but his best attack is to throw a chunk of the scenery at you, such as an I-beam. You can dodge them with QTEs but the best defence is to keep moving.

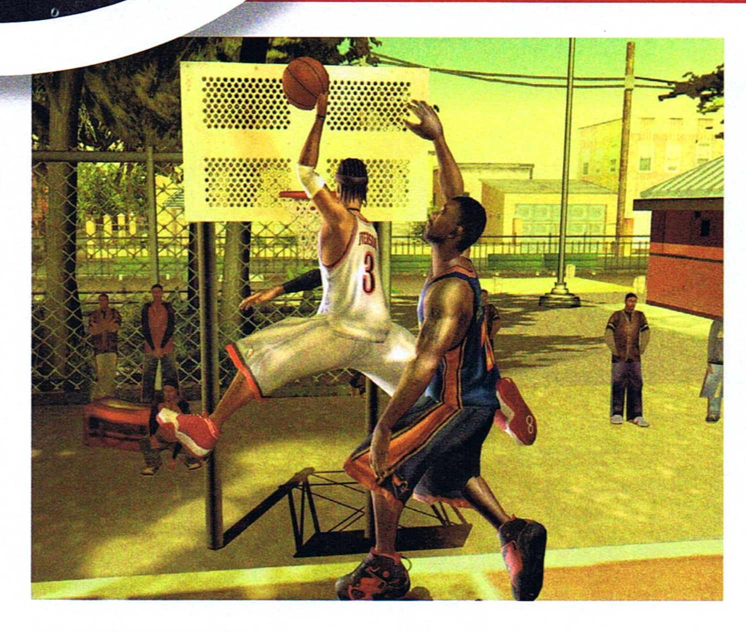
Once you've managed around eight stabs to Saddler's eye, Ada will toss a special rocket launcher onto the field. It's on the small walkway near the main platform, accessible via a pair of bridges.

Once you've got the weapon, get as far away from Saddler as you can and launch the rocket. Don't worry too much if you miss; you can still beat Saddler, but it'll take a lot longer.

When he's dead, it's all over bar the shouting. One jet-ski ride later, you've beaten *Resident Evil 4*! Now go back and do it all over again…

THE TIPS YOU NEED FOR THE GAMES YOU'RE PLAYING...

TIPS EXTRA



STARFOX ASSAULT

UNLOCK DEMON SNIPERS VS MODE
Collect 50 flags in one-player mode.

UNLOCK BONUSES
Play the following number of multiplayer matches:

BOOSTER PACK AND LAUNCHER TILT MODE 230 matches
UNLOCK BOOSTER PACKS 90 matches
BRAWL MODE 110 matches
UNLOCK CLUSTER BOMBS 200 matches
UNLOCK CROWN CAPTURE MODE 30 matches
UNLOCK FIREBURST PODS 75 matches
UNLOCK GATLING GUNS 20 matches
UNLOCK MISSILE LAUNCHER Five matches
UNLOCK MISSILE LAUNCHER-ONLY MODE Ten matches
UNLOCK PEPPY HARE AS A PLAYABLE CHARACTER 15 matches
UNLOCK PREDATOR ROCKETS 170 matches
UNLOCK SIMPLE MAP 4 60 matches
UNLOCK SIMPLE MAP 5 260 matches
UNLOCK ZONESS SEA BASE 130 matches
UNLOCK TITANIA DESERT 40 matches



UNLOCK SURE-SHOT SCUFFLE MODE (ONE-HIT KILLS) 50 matches
UNLOCK WOLFEN 150 matches
UNLOCK ROCKET LAUNCHER IN MULTIPLAYER MODE Five matches

UNLOCK XEVIOUS BONUS GAME
Collect all silver medals in story mode.

UNLOCK APAROID CITY
Complete Aparoid Homeworld: Breaching the Defenses.

UNLOCK CORNERIA CITY
Complete Corneria: War Comes Home.

UNLOCK FICHINA
Complete Fichina: Into the Storm.

UNLOCK INNER SARGASSO HIDEOUT
Complete Sargasso Space Zone: Hostilities Revisited.

UNLOCK KATINA OUTPOST
Complete Katina: Frontier Base Battle.

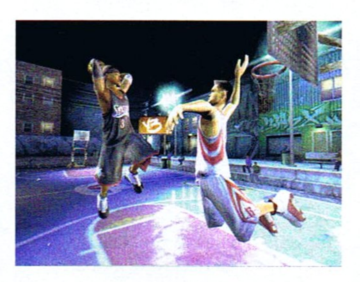
UNLOCK OUTER SARGASSO HIDEOUT
Complete Sargasso Space Zone: Hostilities Revisited.

UNLOCK PLANET SAURIA
Complete Sauria: Reunion.

UNLOCK SPACE STATION
Complete Orbital Gate: Incoming.

UNLOCK SURVIVOR MODE
Complete the game.

UNLOCK WOLF O'DONNEL IN MULTIPLAYER
Complete the game on bronze difficulty.



NBA STREET V3

STREET CHALLENGE BONUSES
Complete Street Challenge Mode to unlock all court creator items, NBA legends, street legends, V3 store items and 50,000 street points. Also you can play in a bonus tournament on the last Sunday of week 10.

UNLOCK BIGGIE LITTLES
Beat Biggie's team in the first tournament you're invited to at the Cage, NY.

UNLOCK DIME
Beat Dime's team in the finals of Can You Spare A Dime?.

RESIDENT EVIL 4

UNLOCK 0.40 FIRE SPEED FOR SEMI-AUTO RIFLE
Fully upgrade semi-auto rifle.

UNLOCK 1.8 FIREPOWER FOR TMP
Fully upgrade TMP.

UNLOCK 10 FIREPOWER FOR RIOT GUN
Fully upgrade riot gun.

UNLOCK 100 MAX AMMO FOR MATILDA
Fully upgrade Matilda.

UNLOCK 100 MAX AMMO FOR STRIKER SHOTGUN
Fully upgrade Striker shotgun.

UNLOCK 18 FIREPOWER FOR RIFLE
Fully upgrade rifle.

UNLOCK 3.4 FIREPOWER FOR BLACKTAIL
Fully upgrade Blacktail.

UNLOCK 5 FIREPOWER FOR RED9
Fully upgrade Red9.

UNLOCK 50 FIREPOWER FOR BROKEN BUTTERFLY
Fully upgrade Broken Butterfly.

UNLOCK HOMING MISSILE FOR MINE THROWER
Fully upgrade mine thrower.

INCREASE THE POSSIBILITY OF A HEADSHOT BY FIVE
Fully upgrade handgun.

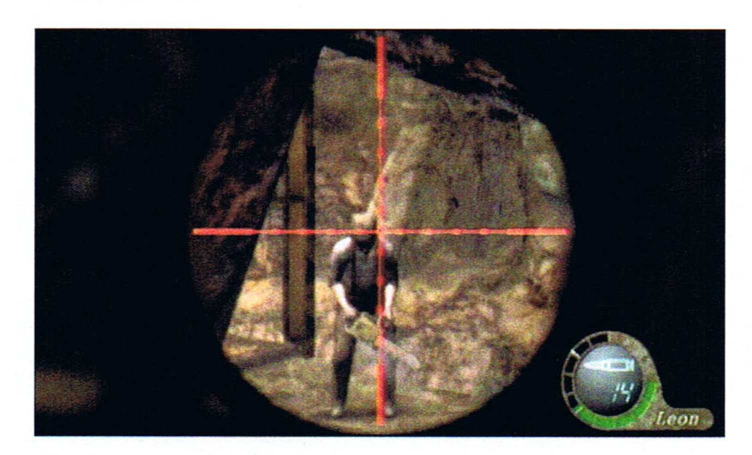
INCREASE FIREPOWER FOR DISTANT TARGETS
Fully upgrade shotgun.

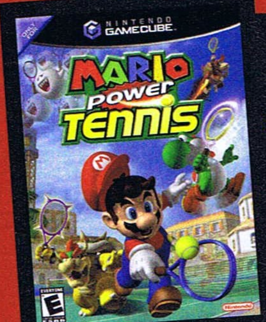
PENETRATE UP TO FIVE BODIES
Fully upgrade Punisher.

UNLOCK PUNISHER PISTOL
Shoot 15 blue medallions.

BATEN KAITOS: ETERNAL WINGS & THE LOST OCEAN

UNLOCK NAMCO CHARACTER MAGNUS 1: PAC-MAN
Combine cherry, strawberry, orange, apple and melon cards.





READERS' TOP TEN TIPS

Can you out-tip Tips Extra? Send in your hint-tastic helps and we'll 'sort out' the top tipster with a copy of Mario Power Tennis from Geraint's 'special drawer'.



1. 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

Rock and Roll

If you roll whenever you take a shot, the shot won't register on the stats, so they will say you've got lots of kills without taking any shots. That makes your accuracy really high and you can easily get a gold.

David Morrish, Petworth

2. PIKMIN 2

Drop the Bomb

On *Pikmin 2*, bomb rocks can't be picked up, right? Yes they can. Make Olimar or Louie walk into the bomb rock and hold the direction you're facing. You will pick up the bomb rock; press A to throw it.

Tom Fisher, Bisley

3. DONKEY KONGA

Bongoing Mad

Hit both bongos for the game to register yellow, red and purple notes – great for hard combos!

Michael Knappett, Morecambe

4. THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER

How to Handle Yourself

In Ganon's tower there are identical rooms leading to the light arrow. If you can't find the correct room, attack Phantom Ganon and, when he drops his sword, follow his sword handle to the final room. Defeat him and get the light arrow.

Luke Oakes, West Midlands

5. POKEMON RUBY/ SAPPHIRE

Lotto Madness

In the Lilly Cove department store, save your game before buying a lottery ticket. If you don't win, restart from your save. You can repeat this until you win.

Chris Edwards, Mid Glamorgan

6. METROID PRIME

Charge it up

When powering up a charge beam, release A just before the ball of energy appears on the end of your arm cannon. This makes using the charge beam quicker.

Tim Moule, March

7. SECOND SIGHT

Inter-Office Relations

Get an Action Replay disc with infinite PSI power enabled, then go to the Conspiracy level. Possess any guard and deactivate the camera, but don't kill anyone. Then sneak into the office where you deactivated the camera. Hide under a desk, possess the cleaner and then, when a guard comes in, give him a smack and see what happens.

Adam Parker, Chester

8. PAPER MARIO

The Thousand Year Door

In the X-Naut fortress, fall through the air vent that leads into the changing rooms. You will now be an 8-bit rendition of your former self and the music will be the classic Super Mario Bros tune!

No name given

9. TIMESPLITTERS 2

Going Down?

In Siberia on normal difficulty, don't destroy the radar dish or kill any zombies. If you go into the lift maybe, just maybe, a zombie will join you and not try to kill you…

Callum Stockdale, Tonbridge

10. ANIMAL CROSSING

Amazing Gracie

When Gracie the fashion designer comes to your town, use your bongo drum and do a drum roll. A Gracie Original can now be yours.

Ben Atkin, Hockley





He's a bit like the new Doctor Who, only without Billie Piper.

Dr. Kitts

I'm stuck on *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker*. I'm in the Earth Temple, in a room with black ChuChus. Every time I hit them, they disperse into little blobs and then reform again. I think I have to use Medli's powers to turn them into stone and then put them on the switches, but there isn't any light in the room. Please help!

Gary Potter, Brighton

Dr. Kitts flicks open his Zipper lighter and inhales deeply.

Did you know you can burn things that hang on walls with your fire arrows? Shoot some fire at the flags hanging on the walls of this room and the light will appear. Use the light to turn the ChuChus to stone, put them on the switches and some stairs will appear.

Dr. Kitts,

In *Tales of Symphonia*, is it possible to beat Kratos in the Tower of Salvation? I've tried so many times but he completely annihilates me.

Stuart Macdonald, Blairgowrie

Dr. Kitts looks up from polishing a very big, very sharp sword.

First of all, make sure your team have levelled up sufficiently. It's practically impossible to beat Kratos with characters under level 30. Have Genis and Raine on your team. Make Raine cast nothing but nurse and support spells and get Genis to cast nothing but his biggest spells. Defeating Kratos boils down to stalling his attacks – best done by attacking him immediately Genis has used a spell. Make sure Genis never runs out of TP by using Orange and Melange Gels and use 'Guardian' to keep Kratos' powerful spells at bay. But you don't have to beat him, you can continue anyway, although you'll miss out on EXP.

Dr. Kitts

I'm stuck on The Runaway Ferris Wheel episode in *Super Mario Sunshine*. I don't know how to get to the turtle near the ferris wheel. Could you tell me how to do it?

Will Wiles, Lyme Regis

Dr. Kitts ties a tight knot in the top of a sack of baby kittens, then throws them into a river.

First, go around the water to the right and then walk up the bridge to the rollercoaster. Now jump and hover to a box (you should have collected a red coin from here in episode 3). From here, jump to the highest ledge you can see, then butt stomp the turtle here and the shine will turn up at the top of the wheel.



Got an Action Replay? Whack these codes into it...





MARIO POWER TENNIS

Master code
9APA-V3PD-QZKYU
54YB-Y309-W9NXF

Opponents can't move
DPVC-WY82-0BFX3
VAGU-PX1M-2V4UT

Unlock special games
Z03J-70WZ-WE297
RENU-5D27-RJ971

Unlock characters
PYUR-1V8Y-H8E44
HAB9-4DH0-BXG1Y

JIMMY NEUTRON AND THE ATTACK OF THE TWONKIES

Master code
WP5P-QVW6-QCK5D
X8HD-VNTQ-9F1AB

Lots of genius points
W5EV-HZXK-XAFHY
VWU3-6CQH-3CGP3

Infinite invention juice
V03X-XD7F-M0J35
0T60-DCQ0-4XNDK
H66D-03WU-J7B9D

Infinite rocket shield
8WND-1GGC-HH5KR
UZ9T-W4EN-YA345



SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS - THE MOVIE

Master code
MMXU-0G4U-4BZQN
JRTQ-HBNM-XVE96

Infinite health
FUXW-R8RT-78F93
3M8C-AK1Q-Z94CG
U1F9-KGWW-R0M7W

Max health
12EM-577D-1VWF3
WE7R-78J9-TUYE5
K7TE-UR5P-KWAAH

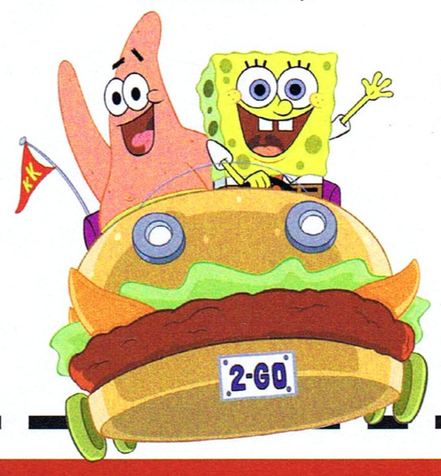
Infinite upgrade points
CA04-T4GR-KR2PU
DGQC-KMQ3-E5WZQ

Spongebob: upgrades
CHJB-VD10-GZYHU
Y1F8-N8XQ-XH9MV
PEW3-H8PD-7462E

Patrick: upgrades
BQ89-1EW0-DZF6B
FFWQ-EBZK-E750Z
V79N-KR1D-BRYNZ

Turn into Spongebob (Press R+Y)
YUYN-36TW-345DV
8PM4-RVEJ-B7W3K
7YHA-EKTV-JW0Z5

Turn into Patrick (Press R+X)
TQM8-T1MJ-5TGPK
PP6G-YDXH-NZKCE
3VPP-VMU8-NYA7J



NGC YOUR TOP TIPS

YOUR TOP TIPS SHARE THE KNOWLEDGE AND BAG YOURSELF A PRIZE...

Found an interesting tip, secret or quirk in one of your games? Send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. If yours is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a cool prize. Good, huh? Just don't send us cheat codes from the 'net...

HERE'S MY TOP TIP...

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS

Name ....

Address ....

.... Postcode ....

Send to:
TIPS EXTRA, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW
or e-mail ngc@futurenet.co.uk

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Or just buy two copies of the mag. That way you can keep a spare copy in the khazi to help focus your mind.

DUEL MASTERS
TRADING CARD GAME

DA MAX!



GET THE OFFICIAL DUEL MASTERS MAGAZINE 3 MONTHS FOR FREE!

D-Max is the official club for the Duel Masters Trading Card Game. Joining is absolutely free and now unlocks more booty than ever before. Not only do you get a personalized membership card, exclusive access on the Duel Masters website and a goodie bag – you now also get a free 3 months subscription to the official Duel Masters magazine. So join now to Rule the Duel!

www.duelmasters.com/uk

YES, I WANT TO BECOME A D-MAX MEMBER AND GET THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE 3 MONTHS FOR FREE!

To register for the Duel Masters D-Max Club, fill in this coupon and send it to : Duel Masters, Dmax Club, Hasbro Consumer Affairs, PO Box 43, Newport NP19 4YD.
Limited to one D-MAX membership per person. If you are under 18, get your parents to sign this coupon below, after reading the "parents information" at the bottom.

First name: .... Last name: ....

Date of birth: .... Address: ....

Town: ....

County: .... Post Code: ....

Country: ....

e-mail: ....

Parent/Guardian's printed name: ....

Parent/Guardian's signature: ....

D MAX

Parents: Your child would like to register for the D-MAX program from Wizards of the Coast. When you send in this form, he/she will be sent a membership kit including fun printed materials related to Duel Masters and a membership card. From time to time he/she may also be sent other physical mailings and emails. In addition, he/she will gain access to a special area of the Duel Masters web site. While visiting the Duel Masters web site, your child may change his/her contact information and participate in online surveys. Before we can allow your child's personal and demographic information to be viewed and modified online, we want to notify you about our online information collection practices and obtain your permission. We ask you first read through the "Note to Parents" in the Wizards Website Privacy Statement (http://www.wizards.com/parents), which identifies the personal information that Wizards of the Coast collects from children online and the way we handle such information. If you cannot connect to our web site, our customer service team can provide you with the information and answer any other questions (++ 32) 70 233 277 or (+44) (0) 8457 125599. When you have finished and wish to provide your consent, please sign this registration form where it says "Parent/Guardian's Signature." *Please note that once you have signed and sent us this form, you always have the ability to: (i.) review your child's personal information collected online; (ii.) request that we delete your child's personal information online; (iii.) stop us from further using or collecting additional personal information online about your child without gaining new permission from you. To do so, please contact us using the information provided above.*

Wizards of the Coast

Hasbro



Just like the advert said – go on, try it...



Think of it as the gaming equivalent of Alcoholics Anonymous where you, and a bunch of other hopelessly addicted gamers, can seek solice each month. Even if it's only to bask in the warming realisation that there are at least *some* people out there with a much bigger problem than than you. Er, only with Skill Club, we actively *encourage* you to spend those long evenings honing your skills before bragging to the world just how 'mad' they really are (your skills, that is, not the other competitors).

How It Works

We've conjured up 20 tricky challenges, and you can tackle any number of them. If you complete three, you'll gain a place in the Bronze league; complete seven, and you'll be honoured with a placing in the Silver league. Ten challenges completed means you'll be entered into the Gold league, and a mighty 14 proves that you're the best of the best and are worthy of entry to the Platinum league. You'll get a certificate for each league that you place in, and if you somehow manage to beat all 20 challenges (there are three more to come in the near future) you'll get a special Skill Club Guru award and certificate. So what are you waiting for?

THE RULES

- **Three completed challenges earns a Bronze placing; seven a Silver, 10 a Gold, and 14 a Platinum.**
- **You can enter any challenges you like.**
- **Each challenge must be accompanied by either the photographic or videotaped proof that is requested.**
- **Use of cheat codes, Action Replays and the like is strictly prohibited – cheaters will be subjected to ritual humiliation for all to see.**
- **You are allowed to submit extra challenges at a later date to increase your standing – you don't have to do them all at once.**
- **There are only 17 challenges here – we'll be adding five more over the coming months to take advantage of games such as *Timesplitters: Future Perfect* and *Starfox Assault*.**
- **If you want your tapes etc back, please include a stamped, addressed envelope.**

● NGC would like to offer a thousand thanks to the following members of the Games Radar forums for their contributions to Skill Club 2005: Pell, Rex_McGee, TS2Master, tnman, LewisVoigtlanderFord, Andrew Mills, Drumstick, Plasticcoated, Thanatos, Vyper, Lenty, sntaa, Adam Pollard, and Falcon. Cheers!

NGC SKILL CLUB ENTRY FORM



A *F-Zero GX*	K *Tales of Symphonia*
B *Super Smash Bros. Melee*	L *Freedom Fighters*
C *Pikmin 2*	M *The Legend of Zelda Wind Waker*
D *Soul Calibur 2*	N *Timesplitters 2*
E *Metroid Prime 2 Echoes*	O *Eternal Darkness*
F *Resident Evil*	P *DK: Jungle Beat*
G *Spider-Man 2*	Q *Resident Evil 4*
H *1080 Snowboarding*	R *TBA*
I *Donkey Konga*	S *TBA*
J *Star Wars Rogue Squadron 2: Rogue*	T *TBA*

Hello there

Completed enough challenges to earn a certificate? Tick them off here and send your completed form plus video/photo proof to:
Skill Club 2005,
NGC Magazine,
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath
BA1 2BW

Please send my certificate to:

NAME:..

ADDRESS:..

....

....

....

....

Use a photocopy of this form if you'd rather not cut your copy of **NGC** Magazine

Challenge A — *F-Zero GX*

What You Must Do: Open up and beat all the staff ghosts.
Proof: A photo or video of your times



Challenge B — *Super Smash Bros. Melee*

What You Must Do: Get a total time of under 3 minutes 50 seconds for 10 man melee.
Proof: A photo of the screen showing total time spent.



Challenge C — *Pikmin 2*

What You Must Do: Complete the game in a mere 10 days with all 201 pieces of treasure found. There's literally no room for error here.
Proof: A photo of the stats screen showing how much treasure you've collected.

Challenge D — *Soul Calibur 2*

What You Must Do: With Mitsurugi and the Damascus Sword (which can't block attacks), complete 15 battles on Standard Extra Survival mode. Erk.
Proof: A video of your performance.

Challenge E — *Metroid Prime 2: Echoes*

What You Must Do: Complete it with 22% items - no missiles, energy, dark/light beam expansions, bombs or beam special weapons.
Proof: A photo of the ending stats screen with 22% items clearly visible.

Challenge F — *Resident Evil*

What You Must Do: Complete the game in under two hours with Jill. A nice speed run that keeps it tight, but certainly not impossible as it just requires a reasonably efficient route.
Proof: A photo of your time.

Challenge G — *Spider-Man 2*

What You Must Do: What You Must Do: Find every token. Secret, Hideout, Skyscraper… all of them!
Proof: Photos or video of the relevant stats.

Challenge H — *1080 Snowboarding*

What You Must Do: Beat 1'22"00 on Ride Easy Railways - Trestle Trouble, the toughest track in the game. Any character/board combo can be used except for the Rocket Board.
Proof: A photo of your time.

Challenge I — *Donkey Konga*

What You Must Do: Combo the entire song 'Don't Stop Me Now' on Gorilla mode. Yipes! Great and OK notes are allowed but you cannot lose your combo from the first note.
Proof: Photo of end of song screen will suffice.



Challenge J — *Rogue Squadron 2: Rogue Leader*

What You Must Do: Get Gold medals on all levels, including the secret levels.
Proof: Photos or video of every medal.



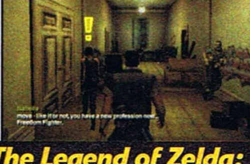
Challenge K — *Tales of Symphonia*

What You Must do: Rack up an 85+ combo. Unison Attacks are key here.
Proof: A photo of the post-battle statistics screen – the screen you get after you emerge victorious from a fight.



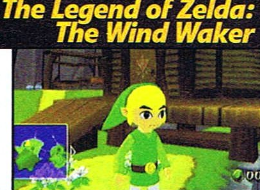
Challenge L — *Freedom Fighters*

What You Must Do: On Freedom Fighers Mode, complete the last level (Fort Jay) without using a single recruit.
Proof: A video of the hoisted flag, skipping the credits and showing normal difficulty complete.



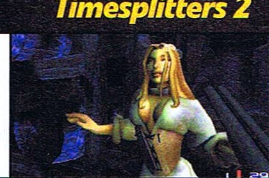
Challenge M — *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker*

What You Must Do: Beat Gannondorf with only three hearts. That means you can only have collected three hearts in the entire game – no more!
Proof: A video of your performance.



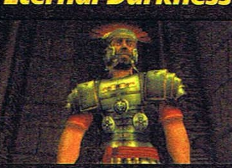
Challenge N — *Timesplitters 2*

What You Must Do: Get 56 Arcade Awards.
Proof: Video of you scrolling down the list of 56 arcade awards.



Challenge O — *Eternal Darkness*

What you Must Do: Complete the game three times, once with each artifact.
Proof: A photo showing that Eternal Mode is available.



Challenge P — *Donkey Konga: Jungle Beat*

What You Must Do: Get a Platinum medal for every level.
Proof: A short video, scrolling through the level select screen.



Challenge Q — *Resident Evil 4*

What You Must Do: Complete the game with a 90% hit ratio.
Proof: A photo of the end of game statistics. You are allowed to use a cleared game file for this challenge.



Challenge R — *TBA*

What You Must Do: TBA.
Proof: TBA

Challenge S — *TBA*

What You Must Do: TBA.
Proof: TBA



Challenge T — *TBA*

What You Must Do: TBA.
Proof: TBA



HEY! IT'S THE CONTINUATION OF...

GAME ON!





Honestly, those game developers, imposing their will, expecting their games to be played in one specific way. Don't play by these restrictions, comrades! Break free! Break free of the shackles put upon you by these acursed rulemakers End this, end it now, find your own way to play your own games. Viva la revolution! (I think you should have a little lie down. And stay away from the coffee machine, eh Tom? - *Ed*)

If you think your challenge is good enough to make it onto these pages (the very forefront of this revolution, by the way), then make sure you send them in to Game On, NGC Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW. The challenges that are deemed the best will enter infamy forever. If your challenge is so fiendishly good that it's considered the best of the challenges printed that month, then a free game is yours!

FIFA 2005







FLIPPED FOOTBALL

Oli Young,
Ely

'Opening a fresh can of whoopass' rates quite highly on the now legendary NGC funometer, and this challenge brings in a mixture of both the aforementioned whoopass and mucking about, which is a very good thing in our books. This challenge could go either way. It could end in the tearing of hair, the gnashing of teeth, the apocalypse or laughter. Unfortunately it is impossible to predict and although highly qualified scienticians have been working on this for quite some time, they are yet to be successful. All you have to do is play the CPU in a friendly match (you can play with a friend, but the scores won't be valid) and hold your controllers upside down for the duration of the match. Then try and get a good score. This is quite funny, so give it a go.

WIN BY  **4 GOALS**  **2 GOALS**  **DRAW**

TIMESPLITTERS 2







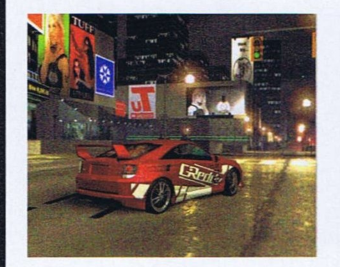
ANACONDA ACTION

James Cook,
Birmingham

This is a bit of an endurance deal. instead of just trying to kill everyone, this is all about keeping people alive for as long as you can. So it's a little bit of a departure for this somewhat hectic exercise in bringing death and destruction to as many lifeforms as possible. Here's what to do: go into Anaconda mode and select 4 players. Now, playing as only one player, see how long you can keep the rest of them alive for on your own. Although keeping them going for 30 seconds doesn't sound like a big deal for a gold, just wait until you try it. Oh, and by the way, there may have been a certain amount of lying earlier as protecting the other three players will still involve a large amount of death and destruction.

TIME  **30 SECONDS**  **20 SECONDS**  **10 SECONDS**

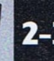
NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2



WATCH YOUR BACK

Jamie Jones,
Littlehampton

This is one for the purist racers out there. Not only will you need to know every track inside out, but you need cat-like reflexes as well. Here's what you have to do: begin a new career on the hard difficulty setting (you can choose whichever car you like). Then set the gears to manual and win every race in each contract using the rear facing camera angle. This is really difficult and should only be attempted by the best *Need For Speed Underground 2* players. Anyone else trying to complete this challenge will probably rip their own teeth out with extreme annoyance.

RACES WON  4   2-3    1-2

POKÉMON COLOSSEUM



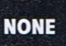


POKÉPOWER

No name supplied,
Via Email



Pokémon can be tricky little blighters, but one thing is certain: if you keep winning they'll get better. This challenge is intended to fly in the face of such nonsense. You want your pokémon to get *better*? Sorry, but we like to keep our pokémon down, show them who's boss. If this is your kind of thing, then here's what to do. Choose six pokémon of one type (dual types, water, flying etc) from any GBA pokémon game or *Colosseum*, register them in battle mode and see if you can complete Colosseum Tower in a double battle without them passing level 80 and without hold items.

CONTINUES USED   NONE   1-2  3

NGC CHALLENGES WANTED

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN...

Have you discovered a weird and wonderful new way to play Nintendo games? Can you sum it all up in about 100 words? If you have a challenge you'd like to share with other **NGC** readers, then we want to hear about it. Jot down a quick explanation of what you've got to do on a piece of paper, set three suitable levels of achievement for gold, silver and bronze medals, stick it in an envelope, and send it to...



GAME ON, **NGC** Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Or email ngc@futurenet.co.uk, with Game On as the subject line.

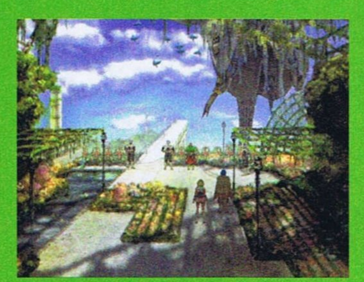
We'll take challenges for absolutely any game on the good ol' Gamecube, but this month we're particularly interested in...



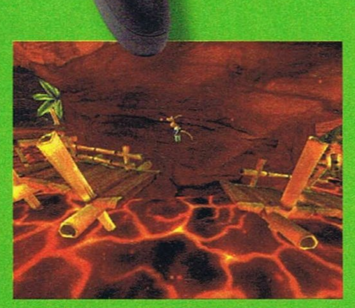
SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY



GHOST RECON 2



BATEN KAITOS



KAO THE KANGAROO 2

THE BEST GET PRINTED RIGHT HERE, AND OUR FAVOURITE CHALLENGE WILL WIN A SHINY NEW GAMECUBE GAME. DEAL?

30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW

MAILBOX

EMAIL US!

Got something to say? Run out of stamps? Guards won't let you near a pen? Then log on to the interweb and 'get' us 'at'...

ngc@futurenet.co.uk

Include your *name and address* so we know who to credit the letter to. Do it! Do it! Do it now!

STAR LETTER

The sender of the Star Letter receives a shiny new game from our bulging sack – not necessarily Mario (or his tiny yellow balls). Which one will you receive?

'Squeal of pain'

Mario has appeared in most gaming genres: platforming, sports, racing, fighting and RPG. But he has never appeared in a shooting game. Yes I know Nintendo wouldn't release a game with Bowser running around with an AK-47, but who said 'real' guns? It could be paintball. Bright, colourful, and because of the different hit-zones, you could shoot Diddy Kong in the knees, then blast him in his stupid, annoying face. And because paintballs rarely kill, you could shoot him again and again while listening to each squeal of pain. I know that you would buy a game where you could inflict serious pain on Diddy until you got hungry. FPS games like *Half-Life*, *Timesplitters* and *Halo* are fantastic. This could make Nintendo's profits rocket.

Dom Egan, Leigh-On-Sea

***Any game where Diddy Kong gets his comeuppance is fine by me. Slippy Toad could run the weapons shop, and if you don't have enough money for a gun you could kick him in the face and steal his wallet. And to satisfy gamers' lust for gore, the characters could carry watermelons that explode when you shoot them. Or has somebody already done that?* Ed**

'Stolen'

I imported a Nintendo DS before Christmas, but it was stolen during a burglary in March and this got me thinking. Firstly, can I claim to be the first person in England to have their DS stolen? Scant consolation, I admit, but a small claim to fame from this tragedy would be most welcome.

Secondly, with the DS's ability to have a touch-screen keyboard, would it be a good idea to have an optional password or PIN that could be typed in to activate all functions? This would reduce the demand for stolen units. Also, I am led to believe that each DS has a unique signal that it transmits for WiFi play. Is there no way that a central hub could block certain signals from playing online because they were registered as stolen?

I realise you can never stop units being stolen, but as handheld devices become more sophisticated, don't Nintendo and others have a responsibility to invest in making it more difficult for thieves?

Stuart Fryd, London

***What terrible luck. But I'm not sure how effective any anti-theft device cheap enough to be included in a handheld would be. Barring thieving scumbags from online services could work, but a stroll around any city market shows how easy it is to get stolen mobile phones unlocked, and phones are far more expensive devices than a DS. Personally I favour the introduction of spring-loaded metal spikes that shoot into the eyeballs of said thieving scumbags the first time they beat one of your high scores. It's the only language they understand.* Ed**



Bonus Letters

Call me mad but I believe the same style of method was used in *Perfect Dark*.

Chris Lewis, Sevenoaks

***Interesting.* Ed**

Talking of lawsuits (pp80-83, issue 104), it doesn't take Madame Greener to predict another case appearing in the not-too-distant future.

Tom Laverack, via email

***Aww, leave us alone!* Ed**

While Capcom have taken the series to all new heights they have not looked ahead, and this is very worrying because *Resident Evil 4* is so revolutionary the *RE* series cannot carry on from this point unless it can surpass *RE4*.

Andy McColl, Gosport

***They might as well just pack it all in.* Ed**

My name is Michael Knappett, a person that likes to see mistakes in your excellent magazine.

Michael Knappett, Morecambe

***Feast your eyes.* Ed**

Boycott *Timesplitters 3* if you wish, but it will be your loss, you crazy fools!

Sam Mills, Wales

***Yeah.* Ed**

'Impaled'

I would like to thank Nintendo for the genius design of the NES controllers. I was rooting around some old stuff in my wardrobe when I came across my old NES. I plugged it in for a little nostalgia. Not 30 minutes later, my little brother returned from a birthday party, hyped up on cheap lemonade and Fondant Fancies. For no reason, he started beating the crap out of me. I was defenceless, except for the only thing to hand – the controller. With an almighty swing, I managed to clock him right on the forehead to shut him up. The corner of the controller had actually impaled his head. He had to have five stitches and I got grounded for two weeks. It was worth it, though!

Luke Gilbody, Worcester Park

***And I'm sure he'll forgive you one day.* Ed**

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Thanks to everyone who wrote in, including (but not limited to):

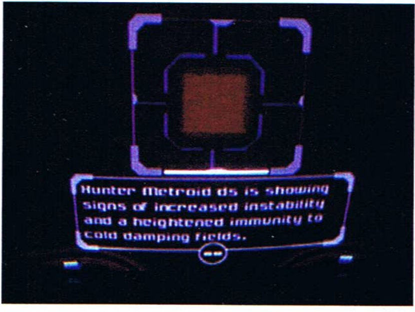
Jordan B, Leeds; Alasdair Henry, Morpeth; Daniel Bradnam, Leeming; Bent Eigil Sumelius, Norway; Gordon Yeung, Cardiff; Ryan Dow, Alloa; Tony Southion, London; Christian Connolly, Sutton Coldfield; Gilles Reuse, Belgium; Peter Roche, Dublin; J Watkins, via email; Simon Clark, Blackmister, Evesham; Ben Dormand, Sidmouth; Stephen Dudley, via email; Euan Black, Fife; Paul Keating & Chris O' Neill, Ireland; Daniel Scott, Perth; Niall Groarke, Ireland; Dave Challis, via email; Dean Pesani, Wokingham; Mushtaq Javed, Slough; Dave McCarthy, New Ash Green; Mitchell



'Critter'

I was browsing through a catalogue of DS software the other day when I noticed the box art of *Pokémon Dash*. Since reading your review I would have brushed past it, turning my attention to *Mario 64 DS* and *Wario Ware*. However, something caught my eye. Among the familiar monsters I saw a blue, shy-looking critter hanging from some balloons. I thought to myself, 'Do I know that Pokémon? Is that a new Pokémon? Is it even a Pokémon?' I then turned my thoughts to the upcoming *Diamond/Pearl* and realised that this might be hinting at an even bigger collection of monsters. It's not the first time this has happened – didn't Luigi write in his *Paper Mario* diary about dreaming of a haunted house, hinting at *Luigi's Mansion*? Am I the only one who's realised this or have I been living under a stone this year?
Josh Wilkie, Paisley

You're definitely not the first person to spot something like this… Ed



'Psychic'

I was revisiting *Metroid Prime* the other day, and noticed this pop up when I scanned a computer in the Space Pirate Research Core. The data refers to 'Hunter Metroid DS'. Spooky… Is this coincidence, or did Retro have insider info about the DS long before anybody else? Had they been approached about a certain *Prime*-themed multiplayer launch title even back when *Metroid Prime* was still being developed? Or perhaps they're all psychic and got a glimpse of the future. Or not.
Jason Mitchell, Reading

I think this one is probably coincidence, but there have been others, such as Dolphin references in one of the* Donkey Kong Country *games and, erm… Anyone? Ed

Bonus Letters

I know it's a bit optimistic at the minute, but you could always try to get those clever people at Nintendo HQ to fit the new console with a teleportation device so that this dream can be brought into the realms of reality.
Adam Lindley, via email
I'll put a word in. Ed

Even though my beloved Mim has gone, I still love you guys (in a non-gay way).
Jamie Mountain, Macclesfield
And we love you too. Ed

I was laughing out loud at the nice man.
Peter Hume, via email
Behind his back, I hope. Ed

The quality (or lack thereof) of your 2004 awards in **NGC**/104 was shocking.
Nikeel Boyd-Shah, Bournemouth
Yes, well… Ed

Do you have any idea why the DS isn't a Game Boy?
Simon Palmer, Brighton
No, do you? Ed

Where are the great *Final Fantasy* games for the Gamecube?
Kam, Crewe
At my house. Ed

Play the games. You sound like old men for God's sake.
Tom Kikuchi, London
Humbug. Ed

That's not a reference to *Shenmue II*, surely?
Tim Coles, via email
Nope. Ed



'Bratwurst'

I had to take a pic of what I saw in London – Mario's German bratwurst.
Michael Rumsby, Alton

You had me worried for a moment. Ed

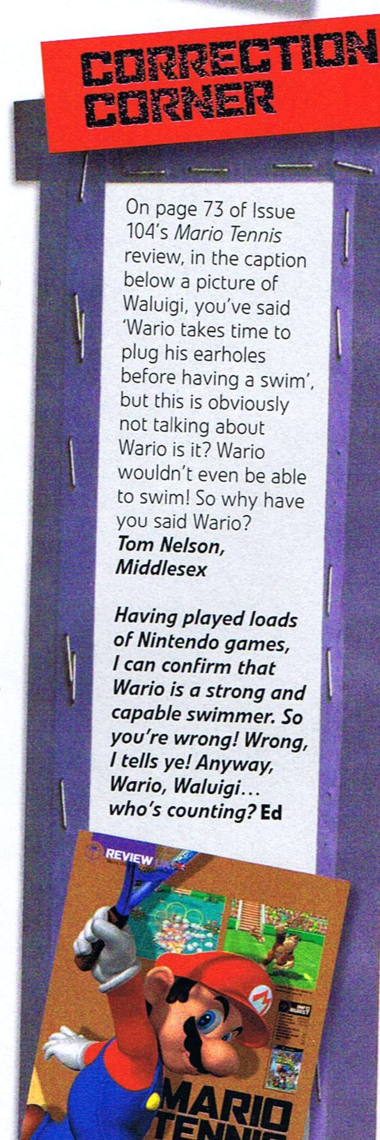
'Apple'

Apple make products that look really nice but also have plenty of power. For example the new Apple Mac Mini looks sleek and cool compared to a Dell PC and is equally powerful, therefore on first impressions people will go for the Apple. So why do Nintendo insist on making crap-looking consoles? Look at the N64 – it's a big black box. And the Gamecube looks so purple and childish. Why can't they make it white with a tasteful Nintendo logo on it and buttons that don't stand out? This crapness of design has carried on to the DS. I know I am very lucky to have one but it is so plasticky and the buttons are rubbish. I was pleased to see that the Wavebird had a nice design, but Nintendo need to take some tips from Apple.
George Jennings, Ipswich

Apple's designers have been 'on fire' for the last four or five years, but you can bet that an ordinary-looking Dell PC will sell hundreds of times as many units as the Mac Mini or any other of Apple's sleek machines. An Apple computer looks great on your desk but if it doesn't run the software people want, then the mass market will never accept it. Consequently I don't think there's much point in Nintendo spending the kind of money Apple does on securing the world's most innovative designers, when all the mass market wants is a black box that sits under the TV and plays* Grand Theft Auto. *Ed

'A-R-S-E'

It is to my great disappointment that **NGC** has started using more American language. I can put up with the phrase 'kick ass' since that is now more or less accepted, but in other contexts the correct term is A-R-S-E. Got that? And 'meter' is



CORRECTION CORNER

On page 73 of Issue 104's *Mario Tennis* review, in the caption below a picture of Waluigi, you've said 'Wario takes time to plug his earholes before having a swim', but this is obviously not talking about Wario is it? Wario wouldn't even be able to swim! So why have you said Wario?
Tom Nelson, Middlesex

Having played loads of Nintendo games, I can confirm that Wario is a strong and capable swimmer. So you're wrong! Wrong, I tells ye! Anyway, Wario, Waluigi… who's counting? Ed

Heath, via email; Jason Sharpe, in the wonderful world of Milton Keynes; Sam Rose, Bingham; Euan A Kennedy, Kelvedon; Joel Featherstone, Middlesbrough; Emma Collier, Leicester; Arthur Plant, Thornhill; Joshua Baum, Dorset; Danny Harris, Witney; Michael Simpson, Bath; Steven Powell, Bristol; George Something, Edinburgh; Howard Fletcher, London; Tracy McAllister, Aberdeen; Justin Jones, Bedford; Kevin Hill, Northampton; Steve Crow, Whitstable; Harry Dalkins, Cumbria; Paul Auguste, nowhere in particular; David Hodgkins, Coventry; Chris, Newmarket; Marc Downing, Exeter; Jacob Rustin, via email; Paul Morpeth, via email; Richard Drake, via email; and too many more to mention. Thanks, folks.

"There are so many really bad Gamecube games"

CREATIVE CORNER

This month's top arts and crafts masterpieces…

'Resi 4'

Here is my picture of *Resi 4*. I hope you enjoy it.
Nick Simpson, Sunderland

Top stuff.

'Beacon'

Print this, and provide a guiding beacon to those who want a *Beyond Good and Evil* sequel.
Gregory D'Addio, Coulsdon

Consider it printed.

'Drawing'

Here's a little drawing for you. Hope you like it.
Jonathan Trier Brikner, Denmark

Liking it a lot.


SPECIAL INVESTIGATION
"Even better than Harry Hill's TV Burp"
PLAY TOGETHER
New year, new beginnings. Time to stop shooting each other in the back and learn to play as a team. All together now...

spelt M-E-T-R-E (see caption in **NGC**/104, page 59 – 'meter by meter'). If you really feel an 'odd national pride' at *It's Mr. Pants*, please spell our good old British words correctly. I'll put this one down to Leon Kennedy guest editing, but in the future I may not be so generous.
Jonathan Cromie, via email

I've no idea how that one slipped through but I won't blame Leon, since he owns a very large shotgun. Anyway, there are loads of American spellings in the world of computers, from 'analog' to 'program'. And since Gulf War I, who in Britain remembers how to pronounce the word 'patriot' correctly? We're all doomed. Ed

'Really bad'

In the Gamecube VHS you sent way back in 2002, I remember you said that *Raven Blade* failed to impress Nintendo and therefore it was cancelled. Why did Nintendo do that, when there are so many games on the Gamecube that are really bad? *Sum Of All Fears, Mickey's Magical Mirror, Jeremy McGrath Supercross World, Jimmy Neutron Boy Genius* – need I go on?
Christian Kolstad, Norway

Because** Raven Blade **was to be published by Nintendo, whereas the others were from third-party companies that can release pretty much anything as long as Nintendo gets its cut of the proceeds. Ed

'Five stars'

Why have you changed your scoring system for GBA games to five stars? It's hard to get such a good view of how good a game is. I can see why you've only got five stars for DS games because there's nothing to compare them to. However, you were doing fine giving GBA games percentages, so why change?
Michael Williams, via email

When we started doing Planet Game Boy in issue 26, we gave marks out of five to distinguish the simple handheld games from the more elaborate N64 titles. It worked well: three stars was 'good', four stars signified a pretty great game, and only the most amazing stuff ever got the full five stars. We decided to go back to that system to make NGC Pocket stand out from the rest of the mag, but if nobody is keen on it then we're always open to suggestions. But the review text should tell you more about whether you should buy a game than a number, be it out of 5, 10 or 100, ever can. Ed

'Fart'

Just emailing you to take up your offer for *Medabots Infinity*. I'll trade you a vintage 1976 fart in a real glass jar! I wouldn't recommend opening it, but it would look mighty fine on someone's desk in the office.
Liam Fisher, Romford

No, you can keep the fart. And the copy of** Medabots. **Ed

'How to add'

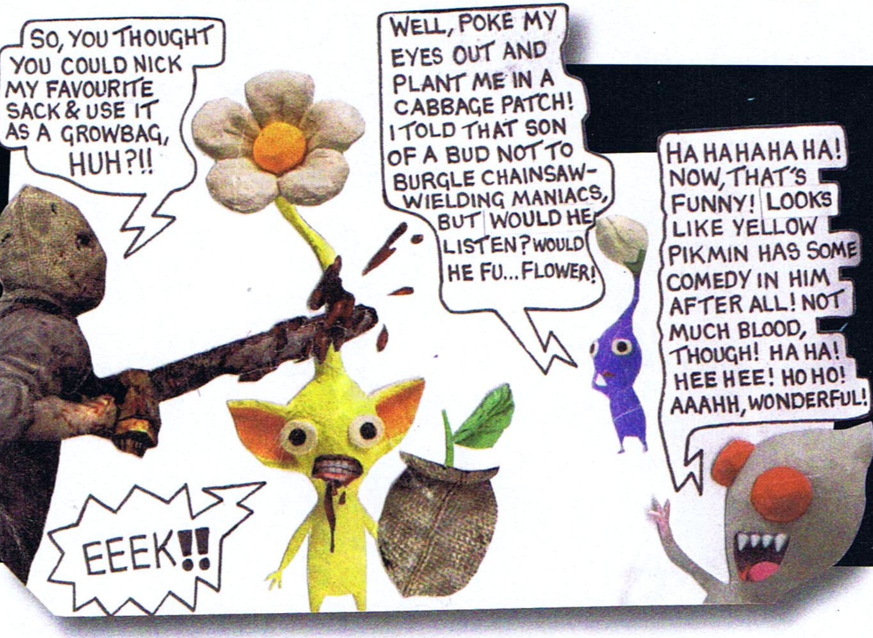
I was reading the 'Play Together' feature in issue 103, checking out what scores the different games got then seeing what they got in the different categories and I noticed that on *Timesplitters 2* you gave it the verdict 17, but the scores were 3, 3, 4 and 5. That only adds up to 15. I noticed the same kind of thing on *Baldur's Gate*, which had the verdict 16 when it should have been 17, and on *Final Fantasy Crystal*



GriNteNdo!

SEND US YOUR NINTENDO JOKES! MAKE THEM GOOD AND YOU WIN A GAME. BUT IF MR WHITE FAILS TO SEE THE FUNNY SIDE, THE YELLOW PIKMIN DIES.
THIS MONTH: ARTWORK SUPPLIED BY CAIN CARSON (SEND US YOUR ADDRESS IF YOU'D LIKE A PRIZE)

WRITE TO... GRINTENDO, MAILBOX, NGC, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK



Chronicles, where the verdict of 15 should have been 16. So my question is: if you don't know how to add 2, 4, 5 and 5, then how do you pull off a magazine with, on average, 110-120 pages every month?
Ingvar Gausden, via email

I have absolutely no idea. **Ed**

'Formatted'

With reference to issue 104's letter about accidentally erased files, I haven't had a problem with that because my brother can't get to the file-erasing screen. And my mum thinks the 'off' button is the one for opening the lid. But what really bugs me is my memory card formatting. In the two years I've had my Gamecube, it has formatted five times – and each time, I was in the middle of a long game like *Zelda* or *F-Zero*. Why do memory cards need to be formatted? Why would anyone want to lose all their precious data? How can I prevent it happening again?
Sam Packham, Derby

Formatting is the process of preparing a storage device (memory card, hard disk or whatever) to receive a specific file format. In Gamecube's case it only needs to be done once, usually at the factory where the cards are made, but if something goes horribly wrong and the cheapo chips on the memory card go mental and lose bits of your data, the whole thing has to be wiped clean so you can start again. Like a blackboard. As for how you can prevent it happening: have you been using a high-capacity third-party memory card? Throw it away. Any card can go wrong, but Nintendo's official efforts are the only ones that won't do so on a regular basis.

'Must try harder'

I would like to correct Aaron Robinson on his slating of *Metroid Prime Echoes* (Mailbox, issue 105). If he was a little more competent at the game, perhaps he would have discovered that the locations of the Sky Temple keys are hinted at in the Dark World version of the Sky Temple in such a way that a little riddle-solving will lead you to their exact locations. Sorry you missed that Aaron, I think a 'must try harder' is in order. *Metroid Prime Echoes* is easily the best game of 2004 and Sanctuary Fortress is one of the best worlds I've had the pleasure to explore. *Echoes* now sits atop my collection as the best Gamecube game yet.
Gerard Mitchell, London

I think Aaron must be one of the few people who actively disliked **Echoes**, *but that's the great thing about gaming these days – there's so much variety and quality that it's impossible to pick any game that absolutely everybody is going to love. A few years ago you could say that* **Mario 64, GoldenEye** *and* **Ocarina Of Time** *were indisputably the best games in the world, but as videogaming matures, greatness becomes increasingly a matter of personal taste.* **Ed**

SO TELL ME THIS...

Your questions answered by the NGC muthabrain

There are rumours about GBA 2 being unveiled at E3 and having just ordered a DS, I would be a bit anoyed to see another handheld console coming out so soon. What is GBA 2? Is it, as rumours suggest, a brand new GBA with graphics to rival the Gamecube?
Ben Dormand, via email

There's no doubt that Nintendo will launch a 'super' GB at some point, but probably not at E3. The rumours stem from an industry 'analyst' who predicted a new GB this year, based on Nintendo's record of leaving two years between GB Pocket, GBC, GBA and SP.

As I recall, one of the touted features of the ill-fated 64DD was to allow expansion/update packs on 64DD disks that would alter the content of the N64 carts. With the DS having two slots in the machine, how likely would it be that future DS games could be updated with data from GBA data paks?
Tony Pang, Orpington

It's a definite. There's a space for a GBA cart inside each DS game box, which will be used for 'option paks' in certain games. These special carts may have additional content for a DS title, or they may house hardware such as motion-sensors, cameras, rumble motors and so on.

1. Would you recommend Resident Evil 4 *to a person who's never played a Resi game before, and are the puzzles frustratingly hard? I know the series has always had mind-blowing brain-teasers but is this one more focused on combat?*
2. When will the new DS colours come to the UK?
3. When is Puppy Times *going to be released?*
Thomas Bungard, via email

1. The puzzles tend to be of the 'red key, red door' variety, so they're not too taxing. As long as you're good at shooting things you'll be fine.
2. At the time of writing there's no UK date for the extra DS colours available in Japan. Nintendo may well opt to release completely different colours in Europe anyway.
3. Puppy Times now called* Nintendogs *has no UK release date as yet.

TIMEWARP

A history lesson that's actually interesting



THE FAMILY TREE

The sordid history of today's bestest games

PIXIE-LATED

Many moons ago, in the time between the Age of Faerie and the Dominion of Men, when elves walked in Mirkwood and dwarves hammered under the [stop it - Ed]. Well, anyway, there's been lots of games with goblins and stuff. Here are some.



△ The Fellowship of the Ring wander around craply in the 1994 Super Nintendo game.

LORD OF THE RINGS GAME 1 (1985, C64)
The first Lord of the Rings game for 1980s 'pooters. All texty, so moves were typed in (SLAP SAMWISE, for example). It was slow, surreally difficult and rubbish.

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA (1987, NES)
Not just the opener for Shigsy's barnstorming franchise, also the template (overworlds, dungeons, boy heroes with big swords, blah blah) for every role-playing videogame ever since.

WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH (1988, C64, PC)
Rambling hobbits one minute, all-out war the next. Action/strategy epic, doggedly faithful to J.R.R. Tolkien's books.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS VOLUME 1 (1994, SUPER NINTENDO)
Aeons before Elijah Wood was walking around on his knees to get Peter Jackson an Oscar, this cartridge from Interplay gave console owners their first moving, digital Middle Earth. What a shame, then, that its best bit was some reasonably impressive waving grass.

Frodo and co's war-torn journey to bung the One Ring into Mount Doom's crack became a series of uninviting subquests, such as getting lost in featureless caves on a mission to find an old man's glasses. Just like in the movies. Stabbing orcs had to be planned three seconds in advance to cater for the slow animation, and the map was darker than the Mines of Moria during a power cut. But *LotR: Volume 1* did have an intriguing party system going for it that let you have five computer-controlled allies. But with Pippin and the lads content to dance aimlessly around the screen or trot into the salivating maw of a snake, you were better off encouraging them to 'chat' with the amusingly camp Ring Wraiths.

With all that, the prospect of a *Volume 2* was more of a threat than a promise. It never materialised.

HOBBIT MARIO (UNKNOWN)
Unofficial 'hack' of *Super Mario Bros.*, with the word 'Mario' replaced by 'Frodo' and swords instead of fireballs. Eh?

STONEKEEP (1995, PC)
Long-forgotten first-person RPG, also by Interplay, with party system and Tolkien-esque world. Hero named Drake, after the duck.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE THIRD AGE (2004, GAMECUBE)
EA's attempt at an LotR RPG. Neat, turn-based combat, but almost as empty and repetitive as its decade-old SNES sibling.

▽ The Gamecube version was little better.



WHAT'S OLD IS NEW

News rounded up from the wild world of retrogaming

POP GOES NINTENDO

Retroheads over in Japan are stomping with joy after Pepsi began a promotion that replaces the boring blue tops on its bottles of sugar-juice with mantelpiece-friendly Super Mario Bros. figurines. There are 30 characters to collect, from little Goomba to Luigi – and his green moustache – as well as eight different mini rolls of SMB-themed sellotape wrapped around two-litre bottles. Throw in 1000 blue Nintendo DS systems available only to Japanese competition winners, and it looks like Satoru Iwata will have to apologise all over again for not treating us Europeans nicely.



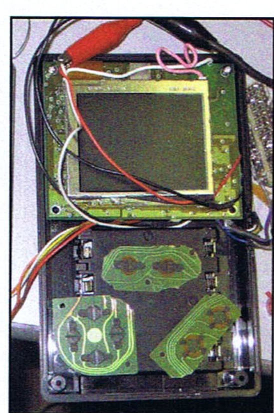
THROW IN THE TOWELS

Having hopped on the Nintendo retro bandwagon with those tiny fridge magnet dioramas we were salivating over a few months back, Japanese toy company Banpresto has now grabbed the reins and force-fed the horses extra sugarcubes. The new Nintendo tat includes a set of superb Super Mario Bros. towels – evidently for people who want to rub a fat, moustachioed plumber over their naked bodies. There are also brilliant cushions that are reversible, so green mushroom becomes regular red-and-yellow one and question mark becomes normal block.

MEMORY LANE

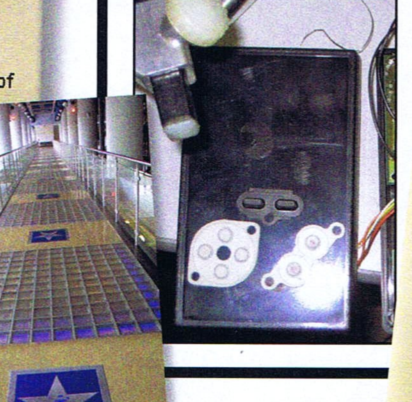
As reported in Newsdesk this month, Shigsy, Mario and Link were this month immortalised on the 'Walk of Game' – a path of blue stars on the floor of a San Fran entertainment complex that mimics Hollywood's fabled 'Walk of Fame'. But retro fans will also recognise the name of fellow inductee Nolan Bushnell. He founded Atari and invented Pong, then strolled off into the sunset and left he whole shebang to owners Warner Bros. That cleared the way for Nintendo to stride in a few years later and both invent and dominate modern videogaming. Cheers Nolan!





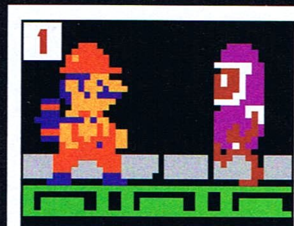
MARIO ON THE MOVE

Do not try this at home. Someone obviously driven mad by too much daytime telly has taken one of those 'Megajoy' things (dodgy NES-based 500-in-1 console that plugs into your TV) and converted it into a Game Boy-sized portable console (dubbed, for reasons unknown, the Game Grrrl). We can't help but wince at the cost involved – the actual price of Megajoy plus LCD screen plus soldering kit *and* the mental cost of tearing apart an original NES joypad so you can glue the buttons onto your new handheld friend. Apparently, it's part of a college thesis. Presumably at the College of the Overactive Imagination.



5 THINGS

... you don't see Mario doing these days



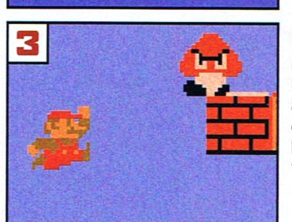
1 GO SHIRTLESS

Mario unwisely shed his t-shirt and showed frightened children his bare chest for archaic NES action-puzzler *Wreckin' Crew*. Perhaps you'd do the same if you were faced with a crowd of walking aubergine men.



2 BUST A MOVE

As seen in the NES version of *Tetris*. Mario throws some funky shapes to a Russian-style backing track. Obviously thought he'd be safe from scrutiny with Samus plucking away at a violin immediately below.



3 SAY 'BOING'

Mario's gone all Anna Kournikova these days, grunting 'hup', 'huargh!' and 'hey!' when he jumps – with the occasional 'woohoo!' thrown in. But back in the day, he used to say this: 'boing'. Also: 'booooooing!'



4 STYLE HIS 'TACHE

No wonder Mario dumped his 1980s stylist – here on the *Donkey Kong Jr.* arcade cabinet, our hero looks more likely to tie an innocent damsel to a railway track than rescue her from a grimacing ape.



5 SPIN ON HIS AXIS

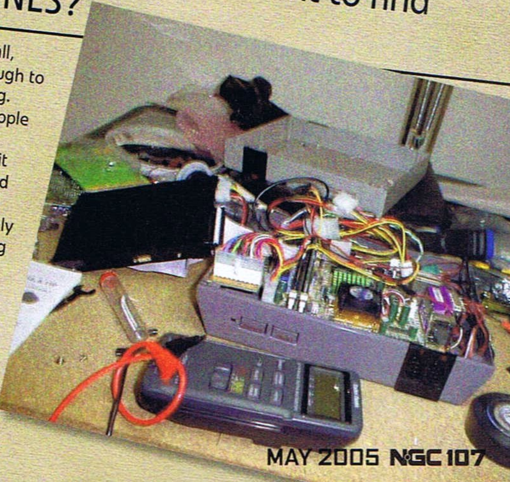
Today's Mario tends to give up on life with dignity. But in 1982, upon getting clobbered by, say, a barrel, or a plate of cement, he would turn towards the player, spread his arms wide and spin like a catherine wheel. Classy.

RETRO TAT

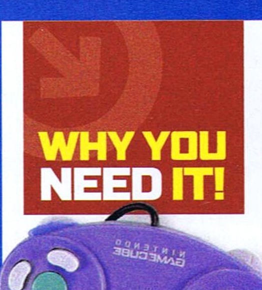
The Mini-ATX: would *you* want to find one in your NES?

The Mini-ATX is a super-small, cut-down PC that's tiny enough to squeeze into almost anything. Which means that certain people (let's be polite and call them 'hobbyists') have made a habit out of gutting old consoles and squeezing a computer inside. Some retro fans would probably need hospitalising after flipping open a NES cartridge slot and finding – argh! – a spaghetti bowl of modern wires inside. Especially when they find out it's being used to run bleedin' Windows XP.

http://www.mini-itx.com/



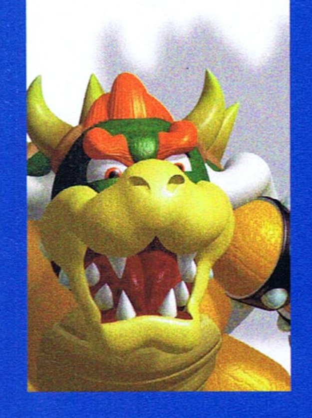




Your up-to-date guide to the hottest PAL titles.

Games aren't cheap. Even when you buy pre-owned games, it's still a bit gutting to get your bargain treasure home and find you've splashed out on a box of gaming garbage. Hence this buyer's guide – it's got:

- **The 100 top-scoring games, listed in score order so you can begin with the very best.**
- **We tell you which issue it was reviewed in, so if you want to know more you can look through your back issues. You *do* have them, don't you?..**
- **A brief description of the game, so if you don't have that issue you can find out the most important points about it.**
- **Highlighted games, with a little more detail. As games join the list, the highlights will change!**

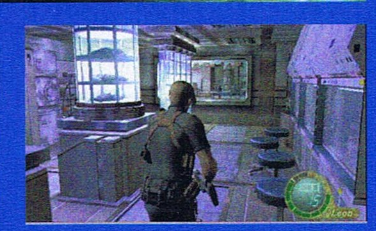


1 RESIDENT EVIL 4 — 97

What, no zombies? What's going on? Something spectacular, that's what. This installment takes the *Resi* series to the next level with an unprecedented amount of innovation. Gone are the three day long animations of doors opening and wandering about scrumping for ammo, and in comes this new, far more dynamic game.







2 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA THE WIND WAKER — 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/81

The babbling of the internet whingers faded to a stunned silence when this hit the shelves. It's as exquisitely fashioned as a Disney feature film, and doesn't lose any of the gameplay for it. Some sailing sections spoil it a bit, but this is as close to art as games have got.





3 METROID PRIME — 97

NINTENDO ■ NGC/76

Looks absolutely incredible and there's no slow down, despite the huge, incredibly detailed environments. The actio/n's varied and the puzzles are mind-bending. One of the finest games you'll ever play.





4 SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

96

NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

Yet again Mario shows other platform 'heroes' how it's really done – in stunning 3D, with responsive controls and an engaging story. Plus a giant water-filled squirty backpack. You need one of those…







5 MARIO KART DOUBLE DASH!!

93

NINTENDO ■ NGC/88

Crazy courses littered with Chain Chomps and pickup boxes, weapons from slippy bananas to green shells and giant Yoshi eggs, and all your favourite Ninty faces doubling up to race recklessly. The AI's a bit cheaty (a shell *just* as we're about to win? Hmm…) but it's a whole lotta fun.





6 METROID PRIME 2 ECHOES

94

NINTENDO ■ NGC/101

Another outstanding outing for Samus Aran as she switches between dimensions to save the Luminoth from the Ing. The story is enriched by the logs you find, and Samus has useful new weapons and abilities. The landscapes aren't as varied and awe-inspiring as *Prime's*, but that's our one complaint.





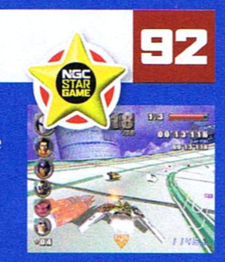


7 F-ZERO GX

92

NINTENDO ■ NGC/85

This is a blisteringly fast racer that manages to keep the pace up without getting the frame rate jitters. You will never accept glitchy graphics again. A few more tracks would've been nice, but with editable vehicles (in addition to the 30+ that come with the game) and a Story mode, why complain?



8 PIKMIN 2

92

NINTENDO ■ NGC/99

Louie, Olimar's assistant, has proved less than efficient at managing the business. Happily, it means they've had to return to Earth for a longer session of collecting treasure. They've got two new types of Pikmin to help them out, too. Bigger, better and even more enjoyable than the original







9 SOUL CALIBUR 2

91

NAMCO ■ NGC/85

Excellent fast-paced fighting. Weapon master mode is your key to unlocking the three hidden characters – but the real star of the show's not hidden! For the Gamecube version, Namco have dropped in Link, complete with bow and arrow. It's the best fighting game on *any* system.



10 TIMESPLITTERS 2

91

NINTENDO ■ NGC/73

Travel back through time on the trail of the nefarious 'Splitters. This means shooting things. Your weapons are time-zone appropriate and you'll wage war everywhere from the Wild West to the near future. And you *will* love every minute. The multiplayer's the icing on the cake.







TOP TEN GBA GAMES



1 ADVANCE WARS 1 & 2

Cute-looking turn-based strategy, with a frighteningly addictive, super-challenging core. Honestly, it's better than it sounds. *AW2* is essentially *Advance Wars 1.5*, but it's tweaked to perfection.

2 WARIO WARE

Imagine the simple graphics and gameplay of Game & Watch fired at you in five-second bursts. Loopy fun that you'll keep returning to.

3 MARIO & LUIGI SUPERSTAR SAGA

An RPG with puzzle and platform elements starring our two top plumbers.

4 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST

One of the most memorable outings for Link (alongside *Ocarina of Time*). Comes with bonus *Four Swords* multiplayer adventure.

5 SUPER MARIO ADVANCE 2

This tweaked version of the SNES classic boasts a massive game world and some of the tightest level designs ever.

6 POKÉMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE

The same structure as before – catch 'em all, send 'em into battle – but still the most entertaining RPG out there…

7 MARIO KART SUPER CIRCUIT

Nicks the best bits from the SNES and N64 versions, and if you've got four friends, GBAs and cables, they can play too.

8 METROID FUSION/ ZERO MISSION

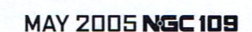
Everything that has ever made *Metroid* great can be found in these two games. A sprawling environment littered with enemies and an imposing difficulty level.

9 HARVEST MOON

A slow burner, *HM: Friends of Mineral Town* is a farming/charming sim to die for. It'll last you months.

10 STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 3

An incredible conversion of one of the best fighters ever. Massive single-player and a brilliant two-player.



DIRECTORY
The best Gamecube games around

11 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE 91
NINTENDO ■ NGC/68
All your Nintendo favourites get together for a phenomenal ruck across a whole range of game worlds. Think Samus could beat Mario? Or that three Jigglypuffs are better than one Link? You'll have massive amounts of fun proving it, by yourself or with friends.

12 HARVEST MOON A WONDERFUL LIFE 91
NINTENDO ■ NGC/91
Romance the ladies, keep cows and grow veggies as the seasons change… Despite a new chapter structure, this farm sim loses its way a little when you've got your bride and have few new goals apart from hybridising crops, but you'll keep returning to do a bit of milking…

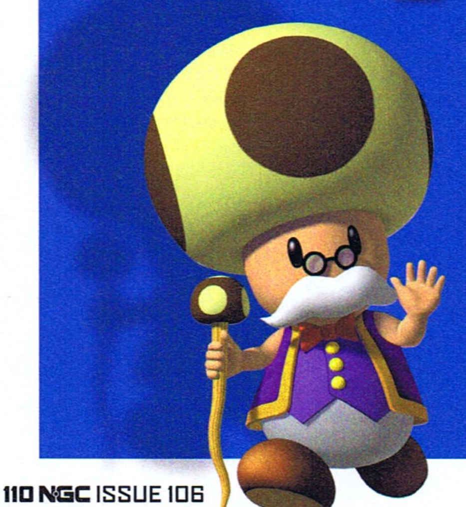
13 HITMAN 2 SILENT ASSASSIN 91
EIDOS ■ NGC/82
Bald barcoded assassin 47 comes out of retirement and takes on the bad guys with a range of weapons. Not bad for a bloke who spends his time in a shed. You're rewarded for doing things quietly – but how you go about it is up to you, because this is free-form gaming at its finest.

14 MARIO POWER TENNIS 91
Controversy reigned supreme with this reworking of the N64 classic *Mario Tennis*. However, if you stick with it and learn the ins and outs of the power shots, you're left with an incredibly tactical game. It levels the field, making it a game where the most seasoned veteran can take on the most casual gamer and still have good match.

15 PRINCE OF PERSIA THE SANDS OF TIME 91
UBISOFT ■ NGC/90
Ubisoft show other developers how to update classic games without ruining them, as the brilliant 2D platformer gets transformed into an outstanding 3D platformer. Maybe there's too much fighting, and maybe the puzzles are too samey… but really, it all reeks of quality. Superb.

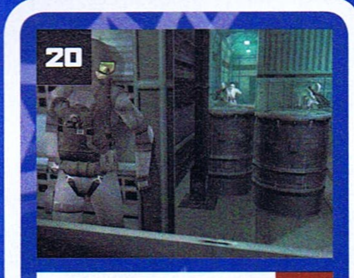
16 PAPER MARIO: THE THOUSAND-YEAR DOOR 91
NINTENDO ■ NGC/100
With Mario's papery ability to fold himself into a paper plane or turn sideways to become nigh-invisible, plus a great fighting mechanism and rippable scenery, this is a brilliant example of Nintendo doing what they do best – making the games only they can make.

17 WAVE RACE BLUE STORM 90
NINTENDO ■ NGC/67
A few tiny frame rate problems hamper the PAL version of this aquatic racer, but it is still a fabulous game. It's convincingly speedy and it looks wonderful – the water effects will leave you staggered. The controls are intuitive and effective. In short, this is absolute magic.



18 VIEWTIFUL JOE 90
CAPCOM ■ NGC/84
Some people love the unusual looks, some people hate them. Either way, get past the cel shading and this 2D-yet-3D beat-'em-up impresses. Elements like speeding up and slowing down time during battles only adds to the cinematic feel. It can be frustrating, but you'll love it anyway.

19 SECOND SIGHT 90
CODEMASTERS ■ NGC/97
Excellent psychic stealth-'em-up. Who are you? Why are you here? All will be revealed – if you survive. The levels are tightly designed, offering scope for replay, while its distinctive style and original touches make it one of the most memorable games we've played in years.

20


METAL GEAR SOLID THE TWIN SNAKES 90
KONAMI ■ NGC/91
This is a superb stealth action, with a more than healthy pedigree. A great story combined with revamped graphics to make this old PlayStation title blossom on Gamecube. The voice acting and music are superb. The only problems are the long, unskippable cutscenes, the short length and possibly too many bosses. We're just picky, though, this is a really, really good game that we'd definitely recommend.

21 BURNOUT 2 90
ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80
The best realistic racer on Gamecube. It looks great, it's wonderfully fast, and then there are the crashes… When you've had fun roaring round the streets, Crash mode gives you the opportunity to beat up your car in the most spectacular manner possible. Accessible and entertaining.

22 WARIO WARE INC. MEGA PARTY GAMES 90
NINTENDO ■ NGC/97
A quickfire succession of hilarious five-second minigames are blasted at you and up to three friends. With tasks like nose picking, cat poking and banana peeling, it's wholeheartedly original, outlandishly quirky and very good fun. Thoroughly recommended.

23 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE I & 2 90
ATARI ■ NGC/78
This online RPG will devour huge chunks of your life. Get ready for lots of menu screens, numbers and bashing crates. Note: 1) you'll need a broadband adaptor to play online – good luck finding one of *those*. 2) Third-party memory cards are prone to corrupt with this. Don't risk 'em.

24 1080° AVALANCHE 90
NINTENDO ■ NGC/89
More of a racer than a trick-based snowboarder, although jumps, spins and flips are all there. Short courses and a fair bit of pace keep things feeling tight. The time trialling modes are the best bits – Gate Trial will have you trying to shave seconds off your time for months.

TOP FIVE PLATFORM GAMES



SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE
A tour-de-force of everything good gaming should be.

PRINCE OF PERSIA
An innovative time-rewinding twist and excellent puzzles make this essential.

LUIGI'S MANSION
Yes, it's a little easy, but you'll enjoy every second.

RAYMAN 3 HOODLUM HAVOC
Can't touch *Sunshine*, but it's entertaining and looks 'the bomb'.

WARIO WORLD
Not that tough to beat, admittedly, but still bags of fun.

TOP FIVE RACING GAMES



MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!!
Single-player mode looks as cute as ever, but it's rock hard.

F-ZERO GX
Expertly crafted arcade fun. Really rockets along.

WAVE RACE BLUE STORM
Classic Nintendo action with dazzling water effects.

BURNOUT 2
Fast car racing combined with steel-crunching crashes.

EXTREME G 3
The weapons are what make this future racer shine.

25 NBA STREET V3 90
Think *Space Jam* meets *NBA Jam* meets EA's *NBA Street* and you're pretty much there. The basic premise is that you have to take on the Nintendo Allstars (ever thought how good Mario would be at basketball? He can jump ten storeys and is as small and nippy as a monkey from *Timesplitters 2*…) Entertaining arcade basketball meets Nintendo.

26 ANIMAL CROSSING 90
NINTENDO ■ NGC/98
Ever fancied leaving home and living in a town populated by animals? The full teenage Dr Moreau experience can be yours, complete with N64 graphics and strange noises. Somehow it's horribly addictive, as you improve your house, fill the museum and get a life.

27 SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS 90
ATARI ■ NGC/81
Vast boat-based RPG ported from the Dreamcast. "It'll devour vast chunks of your life," our RPG fanatic assures us. The spaces in between the meat of your quest (for some missing moonstones) are stuffed with the usual RPG battling, puzzle solving and shopping. Looks dated now.

28 CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2 90
SCI ■ NGC/86
Even better than the last *CDS*, but again very brown and set during the first Gulf war. There's a new aspect to this one: you're not allowed to let any of your men die, which leads to all sorts of life-saving heroics and more opportunity for you to 'get to know' your squad member

29 WORMS 3D 90
SEGA ■ NGC/87
You know the score. You have four worms. Your worms must kill other worms. The special weapons are as crazy as ever (Sheep, the Holy Hand Grenade). The only real difference is that it's now in 3D, which will affect your strategies for the better. A multiplayer blast

30


ETERNAL DARKNESS 89
NINTENDO ■ NGC/74
A Lovecraftian horror that sees you playing as a dozen different characters to fight off a dark, shambling evil. As you see more, your sanity meter falls and when that drops to the bottom… This is a survival horror that spans twenty centuries of history. It's not another *Resi* clone, there's more to it than that. There are a few weaknesses in the combat, but other than that it's nearly perfect.

31 LEGEND OF ZELDA FOUR SWORDS 89
NINTENDO ■ NGC/102
This is an obscure *Zelda* game that's pretty hard on the pockets – in multiplayer mode, each of the four players needs a GBA and link cable. Nonetheless, it's great fun, very amusing and would've scored more highly if the best bit of the Japanese version, Tetra's Trackers was included.

32 RESIDENT EVIL 89

CAPCOM ■ NGC/72

Compelling survival horror. Play as Jill if you want to take things gently, Chris if you're feeling hardcore. Then immerse yourself in this puzzle-solving, zombie-battling frightfest. There's a bit of backtracking and the puzzles are annoying, but they don't hamper it too much.

33 SPLINTER CELL 89

UBI SOFT ■ NGC/81

Only Sam Fisher and his various high-tech gadgets like sticky bombs and camera disruptors stand between terrorists and the Free World. It's usual stealth 'em up stuff, but done with a fair degree of flair and polish.

34 SSX 3 89

EA ■ NGC/87

Snowboard around one giant mountain, entering races or showing off tricks. Complete all three peaks and you'll get the chance to spend 15-30 minutes tricking your way down the whole mountain. The frame rate can be glitchy, and it's not quite as free-roaming as it seems at first, but it's a superb game.

35 DONKEY KONGA 88

NINTENDO ■ NGC/99

Drum along to a soundtrack, following the symbols on screen for left bongo, right bongo, both bongos or clap. It's the sort of game that almost anyone can pick up and play. It's also completely addictive and tremendous fun. Despite the extra bongos costing £20 a set, the multiplayer's worth the expense.

36 PRINCE OF PERSIA WARRIOR WITHIN 88

UBISOFT ■ NGC/102

The Prince is older and his game's got more 'mature' (so, scantily-clad ladies and smart-arsed comments have been dropped in). It's still great to look at and great to play, with trickier puzzles than the first game, and although the fighting's a bit dodgy, the rest of it more than outweighs that problem.

37 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 88

EA ■ NGC/98

This is a big game. There are probably lost tribes in there if you play for long enough – but you won't see them if you have other interests, like a job or social life. More ball control, famous opponents, the ability to create your own golfer, 14 courses (11 of them new)… You can't get bigger or better than this.

38 LUIGI'S MANSION 88

NINTENDO ■ NGC/67

The most annoying thing about Luigi's own adventure is that it's TOO SHORT. That apart, his escapades in his newly-acquired haunted house play like a combination of *Super Mario World* and Ghostbusters. The man in the green hat has done himself proud with this one.

39 SUPER MONKEY BALL 88

ATARI ■ NGC/67

The first ingenious update of old classic *Marble Madness*, with encapsulated monkeys rolling around bizarre landscapes collecting bananas. Minigames include obvious ballgames like pool and golf, oddities like a tilting boxing ring and even a monkey version of *Mario Kart*.

40 NBA STREET V2 88

EA ■ NGC/84

You don't need a serious basketball sim – this one is stacks of fun, and unless those real-life stats are really vital to your enjoyment of a game, *NBA Street's* got everything you need. Three-on-three action, stunt combos and special moves, all crammed into a fast-moving game.

TOP FIVE FIGHTING GAMES

SOUL CALIBUR 2
Gorgeous Link-fuelled beat-'em-up from fight kings Namco.

SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE
All your favourite Ninty types pounding each other's faces in.

VIEWTIFUL JOE
The only one-player beat-'em-up in our top five. Stunning.

DEF JAM VENDETTA
The wrestling game that appeals to non-grapple fans as well.

MK DEADLY ALLIANCE
"Mind if I remove your spleen?" "Ooh, go on – finish me."

TOP FIVE SHOOTING GAMES



METROID PRIME
Tough as nails shooting-heavy sci-fi adventure.

TIME-SPLITTERS 2
Classy first-person shooting from the *GoldenEye* boys.

STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER
Looks great and lacks the ropy on-foot sections of the sequel.

XIII
Euro-shooter with comic-book looks and very serious violence.

IKARUGA
A pure arcade shooter that's tougher than most.

41 DONKEY KONG: JUNGLE BEAT 87

NINTENDO ■ NGC/103

Get out those bongos, it's time to change your gaming habits. Guide DK through the jungle to collect bananas by tapping the drums, and beat bosses by clapping your hands. It'll pull you in so much you'll need a Radox bath to soothe aching arm muscles. The only real slip up is lack of a multiplayer mode.

42 MADDEN NFL 2005 87

EA ■ NGC/99

The main change here is the hit stick, which lets you decide how much physical impact your tackles have. Apart from that and a few tweaks to defensive plays and franchise mode, it's pretty much business as usual, so you should know what to expect from this American football sim by now. If you're a fan of the previous games and feel that you need an update on the successful formula, then this is the game for you.

43 DEF JAM VENDETTA 87

MAJESCO ■ NGC/82

All your favourite rappers get together to give wrestling games a kick up the booty. Start as a mere rookie and fight your way through the likes of DMX, Redman and Ludacris, and play the part of your girlfriend as she catfights with other lissome lovelies. Need we mention the great hip-hop soundtrack?

44 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3 87

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/67

Absolutely stinks of PS2 – go on, smell it! – but it's such good fun that it doesn't really matter. You'll find masses of grinds and stunts, a range of locations… Come on, this is Tony Hawk. Before he got in with Bam Margera and started clowning around in cars. You know exactly what this is like…

45 LOST KINGDOMS 2 87

N ■ NGC/81

Lost Kingdoms 2 is a lovely looking card-based RPG – statophiles are going to love building their decks, collecting new cards to add to it and crunching numbers. It's nicely broken up into a series of small and easily digestible pieces.

46 STAR WARS ROGUE LEADER 87

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68

Without a doubt the best Star Wars game on Gamecube, both in the way it looks and the way it plays. Take part in the battle of Hoth and whizz your ship down the trench to destroy the Death Star. Note: the whole thing has since been included as a two-player co-op game in *Rogue Squadron III*.

47 VIEWTIFUL JOE 2 87

NGC NEW ENTRY

The sequel to *Viewtiful Joe* is a bit more of the same. There's no revolutionary gameplay here, unfortunately. Instead the game seems to take assured and considered steps forward to slightly alter the gameplay and therefore the puzzles involved. But that doesn't mean this isn't great fun.

48 BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL 86

UBISOFT ■ NGC/90

Wonderful-looking action adventure with you finding rare animals and tackling an alien invasion. The visuals are stunning and the speech and effects make the grade too. Even the minigames are fun. The world is huge and detailed, but the slightly easy difficulty means it won't last as long as you'd like.

49 FINAL FANTASY CRYSTAL CHRONICLE 86

NINTENDO ■ NGC/91

Multiplayer RPG for up to four players – but each one will need a GBA and link cable, making this expensive if you're to play it properly. The order in which you pick up spells can be a bit random and the players' shared air bubble can be claustrophobic, but all in all this is good looking and ambitious.

50 WARIO WORLD 86

NINTENDO ■ NGC/83

Punching, pounding portly fun. That's fun with a capital F (and U and N)! The meths-swilling anti-Mario gets his very own game and it's every bit as mad as you'd expect. Gather garlic to boost your strength and embark on a (too short) escapade that combines platforming and fighting. Wah-hah-haaaa!

51 BURNOUT 86

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67

This was an absolutely killer racer in its day that was improved on massively by its sequel. Despite the spectacular crashes, inch-perfect handling and smooth frame rate, we'd still recommend you buy *Burnout 2* because it's got all that and so much more. Not that you'd be unhappy with this, far from it!

52 BILLY HATCHER AND THE GIANT EGG 86

SEGA ■ NGC/87

Bright and bouncy, you'll have the 'la-la-la' theme tune stuck in your head for days after playing this bizarre, very Japanese, platformer. Were it not for the annoyingly glitchy later levels and the poor camera, this would be a classic. Who'd have thought rolling an egg around could be so much fun?

53 PIKMIN 86

NINTENDO ■ NGC/80

Only Shigsy could've come up with a real-time-strategy game set in a garden. Olimar's first visit to Earth was a resource-management revelation. You have 100 Pikmin to carry out your commands as you try to rebuild your ship before you run out of air. And it looked as wonderful as it played. Just too short.

54 XIII 86

UBISOFT ■ NGC/88

Unusual graphics – cel shaded characters and scenes, plus comic-style effects (sequences of images, guns that literally go 'bam') set this FPS apart from the gun-toting crowd. Your sixth sense and a bit of stealth help to vary the pace as you set about solving the conspiracy and recovering your memory.

55 NFL 2K3 86

ATARI ■ NGC/79

Possibly not as much fun as *Madden*, owing to the amount of work you have to put in to get your 11 bruisers playing together effectively. However, the enormous franchise mode and great sound and graphics make this a decent enough game of American football, if a tad out-of-date.

56 THE LORD OF THE RINGS RETURN OF THE KING 86

EA ■ NGC/87

Orc-slashing, goblin-gutting goodness featuring your favourite film fellowship. With more playable characters than *The Two Towers* (most notably, Gandalf is now in the mix), this takes you from Helm's Deep through to the defeat of Sauron at the Crack of Doom.

DIRECTORY

Every Gamecube game ever… rated!

57 NBA LIVE 2004 — 86

EA ■ NGC/88

Under the polished EA Sports surface lies the expected impressively deep layer of substance. The licensed music and players are supported by a strong bedrock of stats and facts and character creation tools. Overall control has been improved and you've got more offensive options. It's soulless but slick.

58 RESIDENT EVIL ZERO — 85

CAPCOM ■ NGC/78

Controlling two characters (Rebecca and Billy), you shoot your way through the usual hordes of zombies and monsters, solving puzzles to progress. Fab cutscenes and in-game visuals mean this looks a treat, and it's got bags of the old *Resi* atmosphere – a coppery, bloody, fear-filled atmosphere…



59 MARIO GOLF TOADSTOOL TOUR — 85

NINTENDO ■ NGC/95

For a *Mario* game, there's a surprising lack of Ninty-ness in many of the courses. It's just not as whacky as we'd like. And there's plenty of room for sensible in, say, *Tiger Woods*. That aside, it's easy to pick up the controls and the graphics are crisp and shiny. Plenty of modes and unlockables add longevity.

60 IKARUGA — 85

ATARI ■ NGC/80

Its toughness is the stuff of legend, even on the easy difficulty. Your little spaceship fires white and black projectiles, and you have to shoot the black and white nasties with their opposite colour. There are only five of the well-designed levels, but it will take you a while to see them all.

61 FIFA FOOTBALL 2004 — 85

EA ■ NGC/87

The best footie sim on Gamecube (unless you import *Winning Eleven* from Japan), with around 400 licensed, face-scanned players, licensed teams and stadia. The free kick system's been tweaked, and corner-taking's menu-driven. So, a single game or a whole career? It's all here.

62 EXTREME G3 — 85

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67

An underrated gem, this. It's very fast, the tracks are huge, sprawling and well-designed and you'll find some very cunning uses for the inventive weapons you acquire. The only down side is that it's a bit soulless. The multiplayer's also nowhere near as good as it could (or should) have been.

63 SPIDER-MAN 2 — 84

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/96

How long have we been waiting for a game that actually makes us feel like a superhero? Well, it's here! Freely swinging through an enormous city, you'll actually feel the joy of doing whatever a spider can. It's not detailed and some of the quests and missions get samey, but still… that swinging!

64 JUDGE DREDD DREDD VS DEATH — 84

VIVENDI ■ NGC/89

Mega City One comes to life. Sadly, it's not an especially *long* life, but while it lasts you get to play as ol' chinny himself, solving crimes, nailing perps and eventually tracking down the Dark Judges. The setting and story are spot-on. Apart from the length, the fiddly controls are the other letdown.

65 POKÉMON COLOSSEUM — 84

NINTENDO ■ NGC/93

The *Pokémon* series gains an RPG! Your task is to save the Shadow Pokémon from Darkness and destroy the powers of the people corrupting the poor critters! Aww. Really, though, it's an awful lot of fighting and you'll need a GBA *Pokémon* title to get the most out of the colosseum mode.

66 TALES OF SYMPHONIA — 84

NINTENDO ■ NGC/100

A traditional RPG, and good looking one at that. The characters are beautifully designed and the specific locations you enter throughout the adventure are stunning. The only downer in the visual stakes is the relatively ugly overworld. The rubbish, clichéd dialogue will irritate, though.

67 RAYMAN 3 HOODLUM HAVOC — 84

UBISOFT ■ NGC/78

Rayman manages to create a fun platformer, despite his inability to add anything new to the genre. It's bright, it's solid and it's got some enjoyable minigames. It doesn't get boring and the difficulty curve is scaled just right. When you've played all the Mario you can handle, give Ray a go.



68 ISS2 — 83

KONAMI ■ NGC/68

Once upon a time, this series was untouchable, but then EA found out and strived to make their *FIFA* games better than the competition. They have ramped up their quality while the GC ISS seemed much slower than its predecessors and your players had huge turning circles. *ISS2* is a great game, but we expected so much more of it and these expectations weren't met. However, it's MUCH better than *ISS3*.

69 ROGUE SQUADRON III REBEL STRIKE — 83

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/88

It's not without its flaws and there is room for improvement. Star Wars is all about screaming TIE fighters and taking on Star Destroyers, not poncing around on foot. Unfortunately the on-foot sections ruin the excitement of the rest of the game. But it looks and sounds great, and the two-player *Rogue Leader* rules.

70 SERIOUS SAM NEXT ENCOUNTER — 83

TAKE 2 ■ NGC/94

Don't be fooled by the name, this is very silly indeed. For a mere £20 you can spend hours gunning down wave after wave of brightly-coloured aliens across a range of historical locations. Okay, the killing can get a bit relentless, but for a bit of blasting fun, Sam's the man. Never mind the depth, feel the speed!

71 BATEN KAITOS — 83

NAMCO ■ NGC/103

Role-playing adventure, with card-based battles. This game is unique and delivers a wonderful, magical and fantastical world; the stunning vistas, towns and interiors are awash with lavish colours. It is let down by stilted and painfully wooden voice acting.

72 FREEDOM FIGHTERS — 83

IO ■ NGC/86

Less serious than the Desert Storm series, this is an enjoyable squad-based third-person shooter. Many of the levels interact with each other, so objectives completed in one mission will affect the events in another. Forget the serious side, this is pure fun.

TOP FIVE ADVENTURE /RPGS



ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER
Phenomenal. A reason to own Gamecube itself.

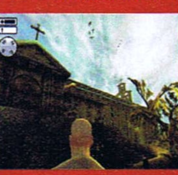
METROID PRIME
Tough as nails shooting-heavy sci-fi adventure. Again.

PHANTASY STAR ONLINE
A number-cruncher that turns epic with a bit of t'internet.

SKIES OF ARCADIA LEGENDS
If 'classic' RPGs are your bag, this boy'll be a sackful of joy.

LOST KINGDOMS II
Polished RPG with card collecting elements. Neat.

TOP FIVE ACTION ADVENTURE



HITMAN 2
Compelling assassin sim that kills the competition dead.

SECOND SIGHT
Brilliant psychic stealth-'em-up from the *'Splitters 2* team.

MGS: THE TWIN SNAKES
Beautifully updated version of Solid Snake's first outing.

ETERNAL DARKNESS
Another Nintendo exclusive that never fails to entertain.

SPLINTER CELL
Captivating stealth-laced adventure from the hand of Tom Clancy.

73 TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 2 — 82

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/100

Tony Hawk rumbles on. This time the graphics have a more cartoony feel, and story mode features a lot of Bam Margera. Some bits don't belong in a skateboard game, like driving vehicles and walking. Those bits are rubbish. The rest is great, and includes chunks of the first three games – with timer!

74 SUPER MONKEY BALL 2 — 82

ATARI ■ NGC/78

If games teach you one thing, it's this: out of balls, monkeys want you dead. And they probably carry guns. Inside balls (WHERE A MONKEY BELONGS!), the little creatures are a delight. *SMB2* offers you a wide array of minigames and over 100 levels to roll your imprisoned simian around.

75 METAL ARMS GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM — 82

VIVENDI ■ NGC/88

Hard – like Ray Winstone in a steel top hat. This robot shoot-'em-up is tough right from the difficult training level. The enemies are extremely resilient and have superb AI, so you need to be accurate and quick. The camera can be awkward and landscape hazards (eg water is instantly fatal) can be unfairly harsh.

76 PHANTASY STAR ONLINE EP III CARD REV. — 82

SEGA ■ NGC/94

A new idea for *PSO* – card-based battling. Following on from the events in *PSO 1&2*, you now have to choose a side (Arkz or Heroside) and do battle by rolling dice and selecting cards. You really need to be familiar with *PSO* to get the most out of it and you'll also require an elusive broadband adaptor…

77 THE SIMS BUSTIN' OUT — 82

EA ■ NGC/89

Having spent their previous game imprisoned within the four walls of their home, this one sees your virtual people playthings freed from their luxury prison as you send them out to work. It's still rather ugly and it doesn't sound too great, but it will last you a very long time.



78 NFL STREET 2 — 81

EA ■ NGC/103

The American football game that tears up the rulebook and gives you a licence to run like hell. It's an interesting premise and it seems that EA are hell bent on releasing all of their sports sims with the Street template. This sequel boasts a new ability that allows you to run around the walls *Prince of Persia*-style to gain height when running, catching or passing a scrum. A quality package for all American football fans.

79 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA — 81

NINTENDO ■ NGC/80

This game is an absolute bargain. The graphics haven't been updated and it still looks pretty much the same as the N64 version, although the Master Quest version has tougher dungeons and different puzzles. Forget the graphics – it's an old game – and immerse yourself in Rinkydink's earlier outing.

80 AGGRESSIVE INLINE 81

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72

This is a top-class roller blading sim. Having wheels that stay attached to your feet when they're off the floor means that you can pull off moves like swinging around lampposts. There's even a career mode. On the negative side, the soundtrack is quite frankly rubbish and the graphics are a little bland.



THE SIMS 81

EA ■ NGC/79

It's life, Jim, but not as we know it. Your Sim has to do all the things a real person would – leave home, make friends, find a partner, eat, sleep and go to the lav. Yet it's all done in a bizarrely addictive way. It takes the 'Sim' formula from games like *SimCity* and applies to to a family. It's like *Animal Crossing*, there's no point to it, but that's life for you: meaningless, but you want to keep doing it.



82 F1 CAREER CHALLENGE 81

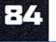
EA ■ NGC/83

Ever wanted to indulge in the life of an F1 driver? Now you can... There are a series of trials to prove you can handle the F1 disciplines. Then you can get on with the racing, which looks good, shifts well and handles nice.

83 NHL 2005 80

EA ■ NGC/99

NHL 2005 is a slick, quick game of hockey, but if you dislike the sport, there simply won't be enough here to convince you that it's worthwhile, it's easy to learn and you can rack up huge scores. But what of the most integral part of ice hockey? The fighting. Far more important than any game.



84 MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE 80

MIDWAY ■ NGC/77

The fighting system's been vastly overhauled from earlier *MKs*, although it's far too easy to get an infinite by button mashing. The lack of ring outs and stage-specific finishers is disappointing. Still, you've got three fighting styles per character, a ton of unlockables and loads of gore. Best with two players.



85 BALDUR'S GATE DARK ALLIANCE 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/81

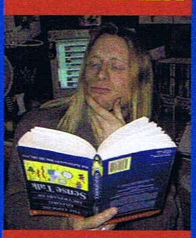
Endlessly battling goblins and their ilk can get tedious, but if you've ever played D&D you'll enjoy levelling up and spending your EXP. However, it's a lazy port from PS2, with slowdown and a jittery frame rate. Nonetheless, the game still looks a treat.

86 PAC-MAN VS 80

NAMCO ■ NGC/90

This tiny gem is free – but only when you buy another, inferior full-priced title (*R: Racing Evolution*). While *Pac-Man Vs* isn't a complex title, the four-player mechanic works well. Think of it as a trifle to have fun with between serious gaming sessions. You'll need a Game Boy and link cable to play it properly.

PAUL'S SENSE TALK



BUFF!

"... but nakedness is nothing to ashamed of... unless you're a member of the royal family, and happen to be entertaining a group of foreign dignitaries."

ANATOMIC DILEMMA

"... and I don't reckon that directing a tube of compressed gas up the nostril would expand an ill fitting head, it'd just kill you!"

FICKLE GUY!

"...Nahh Jes, I've been cured of my old 'Pixation'. Little people just seem to have far too much to prove for my liking. Bless 'em all though"

IMPETUOST-ICLICKETY

The act of pressing the 'Get Mail' button far too frequently. Often due to boredom, or ill-placed expectancy that someone actually wants to email you.

READER SENSE

(directed to David Hasselhoff)
You're nothing without your robot car, NOTHING!
Random heckler
Somewhere

(In an otherwise crazy world, there exists a bright spark of genius!) - PE

Do you have more 'sense' than our Sense-spewing Art monkey?

More than likely! So send 'em in. The best get printed, and if you're really lucky, he may send you a small bag of collected desk smeg, and a 'lightly used' cotton bud.

Send them to him at **paul.edwards@futurenet.co.uk** or to Sense Talk at the usual address.

87 DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY 80

EA ■ NGC/99

More fighting style/ More stylin' fight/ If only they'd/ Got the frame rate right.
Yes, this is actually much better than *Def Jam Vendetta*, with a great fighting system and brilliant have-a-go crowds, but the jerkiness (graphical scratching...?) ruins it.

88 THE SIMPSONS HIT AND RUN 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/87

After a succession of gaming stinkers, the Simpsons take a tip from the *Grand Theft Auto* series and set about stealing cars, taking on missions and doling out a bit of cartoon-style violence. Not original, but loads of fun.

89 MARIO PARTY 5 80

NINTENDO ■ NGC/89

Ain't no party like a Mario Party. Except all the other parties in the series. This console-based boardgame is one of the best yet, but is still really only good as a multiplayer game. The boardgame bits are a little slow and dull, but the minigames – popping other players' inner tubes, mech fights – are hilarious.

90 DIE HARD VENDETTA 80

VIVENDI ■ NGC/74

WARNING: Do not play this in earshot of old people. We're sure The Vest never swore quite like this. However, he did enjoy a fair bit of gunplay, excellent set-pieces and cheesy dialogue. This has plenty of all three, all hampered by cumbersome controls and frustrating sections. Yippee-kay-ay, melon farmer.



91 POOL PARADISE 80

IGNITION ■ NGC/92

Not just UK pool – poke your cue at eight-ball, nine-ball and stunt tables too, if that's what fills your triangle. Using the analogue stick to power your cue is a nice touch, and darts and *Dropzone* feature as minigames. Earth shattering? No. But it's all solid and playable, as you'd expect.

92 PUYO POP FEVER 80

SEGA ■ NGC/91

Puyo Pop: if you've never heard of it, you must have started gaming all of a week ago. It's quite simple: match coloured blobs that drop from the top of the screen and – hey presto! – they disappear. How radical is that? Two-player's a whole lot more fun than you'd think, too.



93 HARRY POTTER & THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN 79

EA ■ NGC/95

A *Potter* title that actually works pretty well as a game! Whatever next? The way you use the differing skills of Harry, Ron and Hermione to solve problems adds interest to a (we're being kind here) rather thin storyline. The controls are a bit iffy, but the atmosphere's spot-on. Not just for Potter fans.

94 NFL STREET 79

EA ■ NGC/90

American football isn't quite brought to the masses by *NFL Street*. Even though the strategy's dumbed down it's still very stoppy-starty and so can be slightly drawn-out. We'd also have liked a custom play editor or a whacky training mode to help players get to grips with the basic plays.



95 BEACH SPIKERS 79

ATARI ■ NGC/72

Not to everyone's taste – although developers AM2 have at least abandoned the jigglies and concentrated on making a proper sports sim. You'll need lightning-quick reactions and good team control to succeed. Its single-player appeal is limited, so you'll need to play with friends to get the most from it.

96 CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO 79

CAPCOM ■ NGC/72

Enormous depth and an avalanche of play modes give the game longevity – versus mode will last you for ages – but it doesn't work well with the GC's joypad (specials on the C-stick? Cheapness abounds!) and so you'll really need to shell out for an arcade stick. It's pretty ugly too.

97 DAKAR 2 79

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/80

Two problems with this: it's basically one big time trial (and you can find a time trial mode in any racing game) and there aren't any real opponents. The handling of your vehicle and the varied courses between Paris and Dakar make up for it. A fun drive, just not a very competitive one.

98 NBA COURTSIDE 2002 79

NINTENDO ■ NGC/68

There's a wealth of basketball games available for your Gamecube and this is far from the worst, with all the passing, dunking and other ball-based moves you could ask for. However, it's not the best or most recent either. *NBA Street V2* or *NBA Live 2004* would be our preferred choices.

99 NHL HITZ 20-02 79

MIDWAY ■ NGC/67

Ice hockey's probably the most Brit-friendly of North American sports – no slowing down, fewer strange-seeming terms to get used to – and this is a fast, slick game. *NHL 2005* is more recent and slightly better, but if you can't get that, *NHL Hitz 20-02* is going to be your next best ice hockey option.

100 KNOCKOUT KINGS 2003 79

EA ■ NGC/75

A decent boxer. Slightly better than – and very different – from *Rocky*. The camera's really dynamic, and the control system can feel disorientating at first. There are plenty of modes and you can build your own boxer to punch his way through career mode. Looks rather nice, too.



Can you see him?
Yeah. He's over there...
Bugger...

Puyo Pop™ Fever

Feverish, frantic and wildly addictive, Puyo POP returns in the puzzling perfection of Puyo POP Fever. Start a fast and furious chain reaction today!

OUT NOW ON GAME BOY ADVANCE





www.thq.co.uk

